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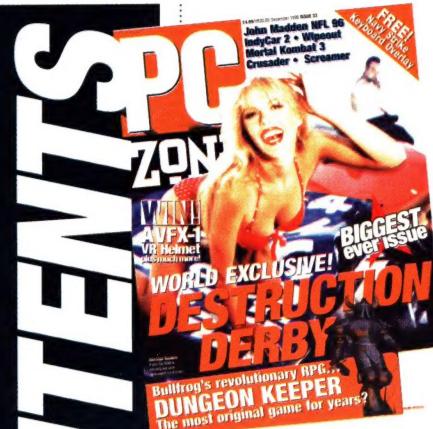
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Another of the EA Sports titles gets the 96 treatment with an all new, and fabby Virtual Stadium graphics engine, plus lots of new stats. A likely candidate for 'most popular sports game this year'?

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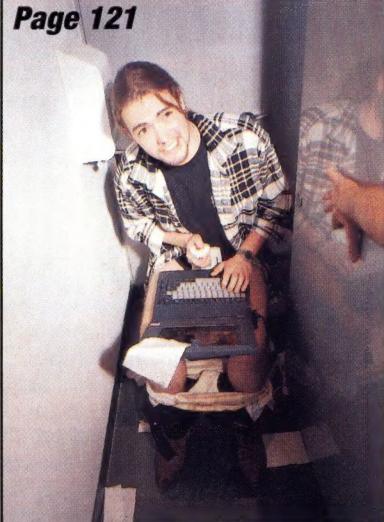
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Get your hands on a flying lesson, a cool flying jacket and copies of Navy Strike from Empire Interactive.

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ZONE 5

"Bullfrog ... turn the whole cliché-ridden concept of adventurers vs dungeon games on its head."

PC Zone



DUNGEON KEEPER™



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beast
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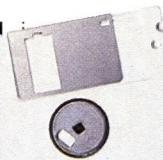
BULLFROG



PCZONE PCZONE PCZONE PCZONE PCZONE PCZONE

C:\>COVER

HD DISK



Two superb products this month – firstly we have the excellent *Su27* demo from Mindscape, which shows that you can do a full-spec flight sim

on a low-end machine, and secondly there's Vossnet. If you want to get onto the Internet, this is the ultimate package. It's a cool browser and has some of the best features ever! To run the floppies, simply put the disk in your drive, type <PCZONE> at the prompt and then follow the menus.

Su27 Flanker (Mindscape)

Mindscape's new flight sim is one of the most spectacular we've seen since *EF2000*. Boasting some excellent polygon images and a graphics engine that will run on anything from a 386DX with EGA upwards, this could turn out to be something of a revelation when it's released next month.

This is actually a timed, fully playable demo that gives you all of the features of the game but with only a very limited amount of fuel.

Controls: Joystick, keyboard, Thrustmaster FCS

VOSSNET (Voss)

This is without a doubt the best web browsing utility we have ever come across. It's the best way to get onto the Internet, and not only that, it has one of the most amazing web searching features ever. Simply click on Yahoo, tell Vossnet what you want information on and the program will then scan the entire World Wide Web and tell you where everything related to what you've requested actually is. Is that cool, or what?

Requires Windows 3.1 or higher.

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

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19 Bolsover St, London, W1P 7HJ**

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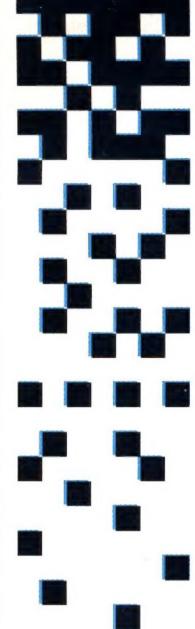
Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (never before 11.00am) on: 0171-917 7693

CD-ROM DISC



Disk

We can honestly say that this month's line-up of playable demos is without a doubt the best we have ever had to date. We have an exclusive demo of *Hexen*, iD's astonishing sequel to *Heretic*, a first look at Origin's visually stunning *Wing Commander 4*, which sees the return of Mark Hamill to the small screen, a totally cool demo of the eagerly awaited *Sensible World Of Soccer*, and loads of other cool demos. To get the thing running, simply type <PCZONE> at the D: prompt and follow the menu system.

PLAYABLE DEMOS



Hexen (GT Interactive)

Play this exclusive demo of iD's extraordinary follow-up to *Heretic* and see for yourself why Macca's been singing its praises at the top of his voice in this month's review of the game. *Hexen* looks and plays much better than its predecessor, gives you a choice of fantasy characters you can play with, and has a mind-boggling selection of weapons with which you can obliterate your foe into tiny wee fragments. Awesome stuff!

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick



Wing Commander 4 (Electronic Arts)

Origin's superb *Wing Commander* saga is about to reach incredible new heights with the pending release of the fourth title in the series.

Wing Commander 4 features drop-dead gorgeous graphics, a gripping cinematic storyline, and edge-of-the-seat space combat action. The game won't be out for a month or two, but thanks to our fab playable demo, you can take a look at it right now. Smart!

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Tech specs

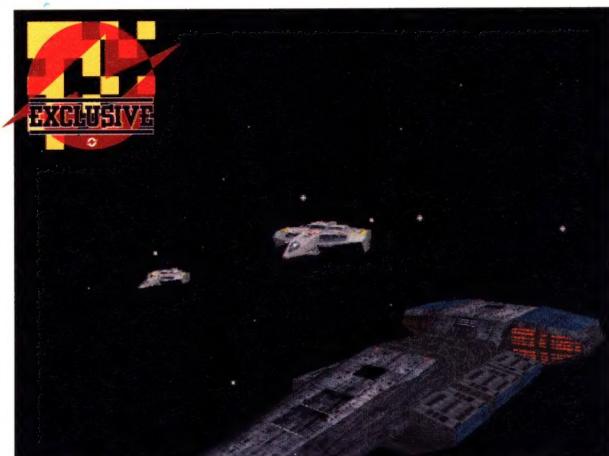
Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)

Processor: 386DX (486DX recommended)

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles



Sensible World Of Soccer (Time Warner Interactive)

Everyone's favourite footy sim is back, and it's bigger and better than ever. Manage your favourite football team or leap into the heat of the action yourself with this super demo of the most addictive football game ever made. The new Sensi has improved graphics, bigger sprites and is still more playable than any footy game around. (Just ask Dep Ed Jeremy!)

Controls: Joystick, Gamepad, keyboard

Su27 Flanker (Mindscape)

This incredibly realistic flight sim from Mindscape is proving to be an enormous hit with propeller heads all over the country. Design your own missions, plan your attack routes and, of course,



Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PCs just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171 917 7983
Any week day between 11am and 6pm.

(DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible i.e. System type, sound card, RAM etc., plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

shoot down everything in sight in this fully playable demo.

Controls: Joystick, keyboard, Thrustmaster FCS

Stonekeep (Interplay)

The game that took four years to make is finally here and, judging by this demo, it's been well worth the wait. Gorgeous graphics and silky smooth scrolling are the hallmarks of this excellent role-playing adventure from Interplay. Explore dark and gloomy dungeons, kill lots of horrible nasty things, and drool over the excellent FMV in this brilliant RPG.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Mortal Kombat 3 (GT Interactive)

Now that the PC is firmly established as a platform for hot action games, beat 'em ups are popping up all over the place. *Mortal Kombat 3* is shaping up to be the best of the lot, with smoothly animated sprites, realistic sound effects and immensely gratifying arcade action of the 'kick your opponent's head in for fun' variety. We think it's totally tops and we're sure you'll agree when you try this playable demo yourself.

Controls: Keyboard, joypad, joystick

Fatal Racing (Gremlin)

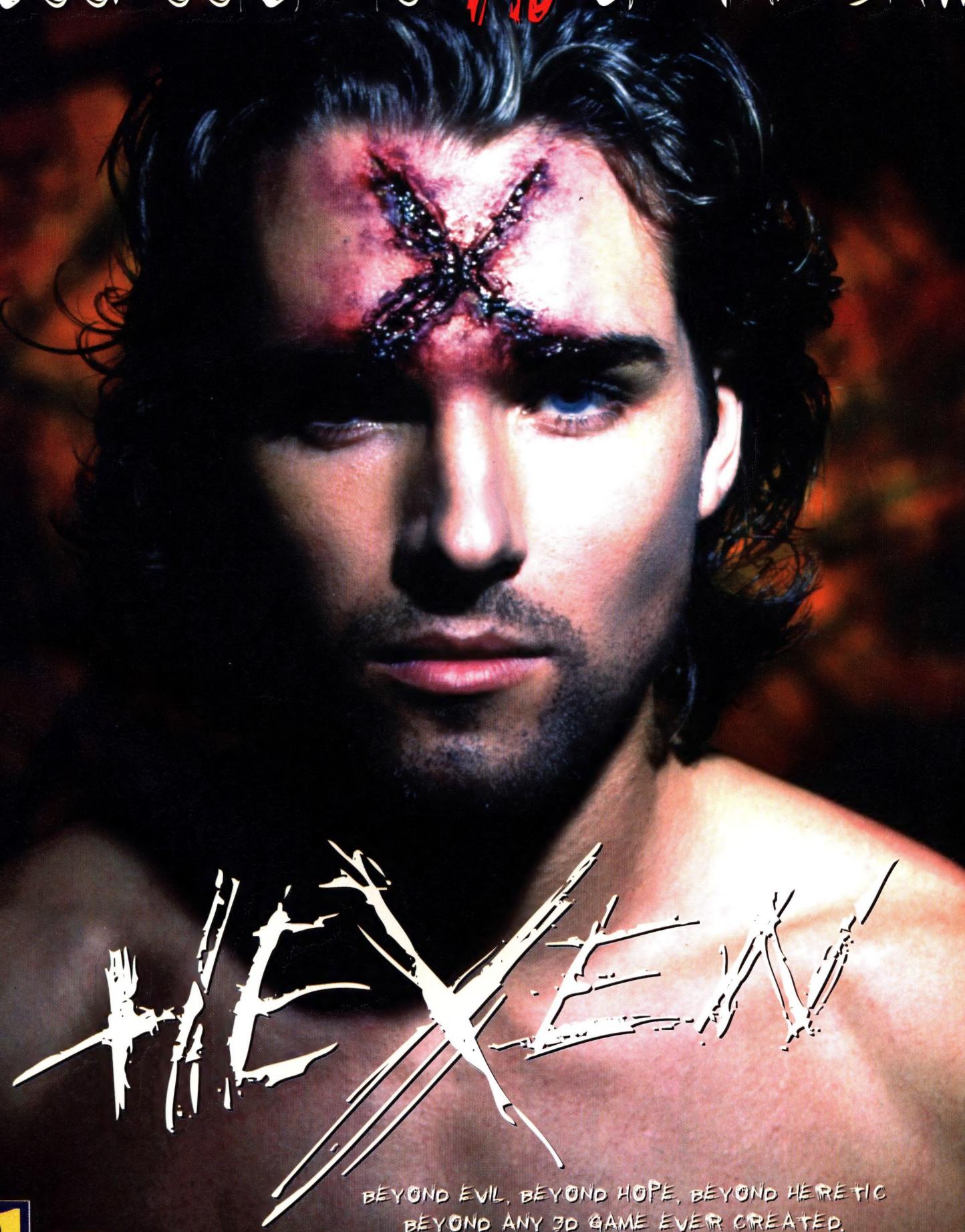
This is a demo of the new updated demo of Gremlin's fast and furious racing game. Sit yourself behind the wheel of an outrageously expensive automobile and wreck it completely

(Top) *Doom* goes all Tolkienified in GT Interactive's *Hexen*. Play the exclusive demo on our CD before delving into our monster supplement (CD issue only.)

(Above) The latest instalment in the *Wing Commander* series is by far the most impressive yet. Check out our exclusive demo of number four on our CD-ROM.

»

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"Dungeon Keeper could almost be described as Theme Park™ with goblins."

PC Review



DUNGEON KEEPER™



Brings Out the
beast
in You.

BULLFROG



BULLETIN Wing Commander



THE SEQUEL TO ONE OF THE BIGGEST SELLING GAMES EVER IS SET TO HIT THE SHOPS BEFORE Christmas, making it the hot favourite for the prestigious Christmas number one slot. *Wing Commander IV*, once again stars regulars Mark 'Luke Skywalker' Hamill, Malcolm McDowell and Tom 'Back To The Future' Wilson, as well as a whole host of extras, and cost a phenomenal amount of money to make – an estimated \$9million.

While there's little doubt the quality and scale of the live action stuff is far superior to *Wing III*, developer Origin has addressed criticisms levelled at the gameplay aspect of the last game, and as a result has made a number of changes to enhance the level of interactivity and combat. This means that players can now choose what missions they want to fly as well as who they fly with, and also have a greater input regarding the overall direction and strategy of the game.

Although the actual combat sections are basically the same, Origin has spent ages tweaking the game engine, making it a lot smoother, faster and three-dimensional. It's also improved the enemy AI and made the missions more structured, while the learning curve has been tightened to make the game both more accessible to novices and at the same time more challenging to hardened combat pros.

The overall effect is gobsmacking, but you don't have to take our word for it – play the exclusive playable demo on this month's cover CD, and look out for a full review in next month's *Zone*.



Play the demo on our cover disc

Quake! Monster shots

Dispatches

More from Mindscape

Just when you thought you'd got to the bottom of the Mindscape scheduled releases bag, up it pops with yet another stream of PC games you've probably never heard of. Perhaps the most interesting one from the latest batch is *Entomorph*, a rather impressive looking *Ultima* clone which features stunning hi-res SVGA graphics, puzzles galore and non-stop RPG-style combat using a variety of weapons.

Unlike the later *Ultima* games however, *Entomorph* does not feature a hero who walks a few paces and then seems to think better of the idea and stop dead in his tracks – in other words the sprite animation in this game is very smooth indeed. This is definitely one of the best products we've seen from Mindscape in a long time and we predict it will be extremely successful when it's released in November.

Also on the way is *Druid*, another RPG'er from the people who brought you *Jagged Alliance*. Mindscape claims *Druid* has a progressive non-linear story with multiple endings, though we'll obviously have to reserve judgement until we see how it plays.

On the more conventional RPG front, Mindscape is getting ready to release *Thunderscape*, a game not entirely dissimilar to *Ravenloft*, the main difference being that the graphics are much better and the gameworld is larger. More on these soon.



Buy! Buy! Baby! BMW!

Team 17's on-line entertainment division, The Games Room, is preparing to hit the big time with its new on-line game based on the stock exchange, which they've cunningly named *Profits Warning* (gettit?).

Players pay £25 and start with a 'virtual' £100,000 with which to invest in stocks and shares, and then make deals based on real-time share prices direct from the London Stock Exchange trading system via their modem. The player who manages to amass the most cash after three months wins a brand spanking new BMW 328, while there are additional weekly prizes for the best performing traders.

If you think you've got what it takes, contact Team 17 on 01924 267776 for details.

WORK ON *QUAKE* IS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE according to the guys at iD, which is pretty amazing in itself considering they've been spending almost every waking minute playing network *Hexen*.

They have had time to release a few shots of some of the monsters however, (shown right) and as you can see, it's all looking just a bit impressive. Just how many monsters, weapons and levels will be in the final version is still unclear, although it is alleged that iD wants to maintain a consistent marketing strategy by releasing *Quake* as a shareware version with a full version to follow. No official release date has been set, but it's thought that the shareware version of *Quake* might make an appearance around early Spring, but as Mike Wilson from iD put it: "We're not going to release anything until we can't stop playing it ourselves." Looks like we could be in for a long wait then?



Zone Raiders

The 'faster-blaster'™ shoot 'em up known as *Zone Raiders*, a sort of *Wipeout* meets *Hi-Octane* hybrid, is undoubtedly one of the best 'racing' games currently in development, in that it actually manages to convey a real sense of movement and speed.

Players must zip about in their high-speed hover cars, trying to outrun numerous pursuers, taking out enemy sentries, while at the same time attempting to navigate the myriad of roads and freeways, and taking extra care not to slip off the suspended tracks. The game supports multi-player and head-to-head play, features three different hover cars, loads of different weapons and should be with us by Christmas.

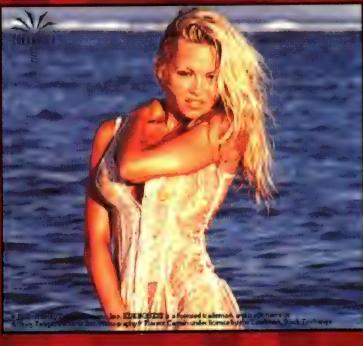
Zone Raiders will be published by Virgin Interactive Entertainment.



Pamela Anderson Screen Saver

If you're fed up with being greeted by flying toasters or windows on your monitor every time you return to your desk after making a cup of tea, try the *Pamela Anderson Screen Saver* from Telstar, and you (or at least your screen) will soon become the centre of attention in the office.

As well as the screen saver, there's also a *Pamela Anderson Calendar & Planner* (see below) on the CD, which not only acts as a day to day diary, but can also remind you of important dates such as birthdays, appointments and meetings. The *Pamela Anderson Screen Saver* is available from usual outlets, priced around £14.99.



Found a book today. Pre-reckoning. Obviously. It had a picture of a sunset, back when they were red. Me, I like 'em green. But, I've never been old-fashioned.

EVERY CHRISTMAS THE ROADS ARE FULL OF MAD MEN.



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SCREAMER

THE ULTIMATE HIGH PERFORMANCE ROAD RACE COMPUTER GAME - ON PC CD-ROM

Graffiti

IF YOU MUST DRINK AND DRIVE THIS CHRISTMAS, DO IT AT HOME

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Hi-Octane Extra

Bullfrog has just announced that it will be releasing a *Hi-Octane* update disc that will include extra tracks and features for the hit arcade racer.

The three new tracks and features were originally designed for the Sega Saturn and PlayStation versions of *Hi-Octane*, but proved such a hit with the Bullfrog testers that they've decided to create a *Hi-Octane* PC CD Rev.

In addition to the three new tracks (which brings the total up to nine), the new update will allow

two players to race against each other thanks to a split screen option; it will also include a 'Clone Race' feature that allows the player to race against himself, a 'Death Match' facility that allows you to set the number of lives you and your competitors are allotted (handy), and a 'Hot Seat Challenge' that enables up to eight players to compete against each other on one machine.

Hi-Octane Extra will be available on the Bullfrog Xmas demo CD sampler (available from all usual outlets at £1.99).

If you'd like to know more, contact Bullfrog on 01483 579399 for further details.



Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2

The keenly awaited all-action chopper combat sim from Core Design is nearing completion. The original *Thunderhawk* game has sold over 70,000 units on the Sega Mega CD since its release two years ago, and Core is expecting even bigger things for the sequel.

The graphics and speed of the PC version are vastly superior to the original game, and while *Thunderhawk 2* places the emphasis on shoot 'em up action, it's certainly not lacking in features, with nine campaigns, 37 missions, a 180 degree 'virtual cockpit', multiple camera angles and polygoned vehicles, so there's always plenty going on.

Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2 is due to be released in December.



Synnergist

Just a little more on 21st Century's rather mysterious graphical adventure we told you about last month. The developers still aren't revealing much about the game, except that it is the first of its type to use the newly developed 'Object Oriented' inventory handling system, and if the screenshots are anything to go by, features a rather detailed and rich player environment.

Synnergist is due for release at the beginning of next year.



Dispatches

+++ Windows 95 among good Friends

Those people who dashed out to buy Windows 95 only to discover that File Manager no longer existed, therefore rendering their machine completely useless, will be pleased to learn that there is a solution - VCI Software has brought out a Windows 95 instructional video.

Before you yawn uncontrollably and fall off your chair, you should be aware that the Microsoft Windows 95 Video Guide 'stars' Jennifer Aniston and Matthew Perry of the hit TV series *Friends*, and already looks set to become this year's biggest selling non-theatrical video in the US. Apart from 'starring' two of the most 'beautiful people' on Channel 4, the video will show you how to multi-task, create short cuts and get used to life without File Manager. A bit of a barg at £14.99.

Contact VCI Software on 01923 255558.



+++ Here's one I made earlier

Dutch software company Domus has developed 'encapsulated cuisine format 2.0' (ECU2 to its friends) that makes it possible to exchange recipes between all conceivable software programs. The standard is language and operating system independent and therefore works on MS-DOS, Windows (95), UNIX and Macintosh, so you've got absolutely no excuse for forgetting how to cook your Mum her favourite dish. Contact Domus Software on +31 20 4953030.

+++ After Dark again

Berkeley Systems has released a new and improved *After Dark* screen saver for Windows 95 at the special introductory price of £19.95. *After Dark For Windows 95* contains more displays, options and more than the original product, and because it uses the energy saving EcoLogic technology (don't ask us what that is), it will even save you money (apparently). Contact Berkeley Systems on 0181-741 8299 for further information.

+++ Whoops! Ascendancy

Last month in our review of the excellent *Ascendancy*, we accidentally indicated that it was published through Virgin Interactive Entertainment. This was a lie. We are very sorry. *Ascendancy* is in fact published by the Logic Factory. Please forgive us. We didn't mean to hurt anyone.

Magic CarpetTM

*This carpet
ride's a nightmare*

"Curper was a very hard act to follow, but this tramples it underfoot. Mercilessly."

"...Magic Carpet 2 has surpassed its predecessor in every department"

PC Review 9/10

"Sexy, addictive fun with more juice than the average orgasm (allegedly)"

PC Zone 92%

"...Magic Carpet 2 becomes a far more satisfying experience than the first game..."

CD-ROM Today 4½ stars

"An incredible gaming experience that's jam-packed with excitement..."

C&VG 92%

Are you ready for Magic Carpet 2?



Look out for the special BASF 3.5" diskette packs for
your free demo of Magic Carpet 2.

Visit Electronic Arts and Bullfrog on the Web at <http://www.ea.com/>

BULLFROG

Bargain alert!

Novalogic has decided to release its complete back catalogue in a special compilation pack for just £34.99.

Before you dash down the shops, cheque book in hand, allow us to remind you that Novalogic isn't exactly the most prolific of developers, and has so far released only three products for the PC (not including the rather fab re-working of the hit *Comanche*, *Comanche vs Werewolf* – reviewed on page 99). However, it's really a case of quality and not quantity, and all three products, namely *Comanche*, *Wolfpack* and *Armored Fist* are definitely worth £34.99 of anyone's money.

Contact Novalogic on 0171-607 9707 for further information.



Dispatches

+++ Star Trek on-line

The Paramount Television Group and Microsoft have announced details of an exclusive on-line facility that will allow users of the MSN to log on to dedicated Trekkie Web Sites. On-line sites dedicated entirely to all Star Trek's incarnations include the TV series *Star Trek*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Star Trek: Voyager*. Fans will be able to preview the new areas on MSN at the Paramount site on the World Wide Web (<http://www.paramount.com>). And expect a Trekkie takeover when three new sites on MSN become available on-line in January, 1996.

Contact Microsoft on 0181-242 4284 for further details.

+++ Conquering the billboards

The runaway fave in the Zone office, the rather top *Command & Conquer*, raced to the top of the charts the week it was released, fending off violent efforts from both *Championship Manager 2* and a number of Sony PlayStation titles. Whether this was due in part to the rather distinctive and unusual billboard posters that sprang up over the country is open to debate, but they've certainly got the game noticed. A spokesman for Virgin predicted that the ad campaign would ensure that *Command & Conquer* would "thrash the pants off any other CD-ROM" and still be in the top five by Christmas, and he might just be right.

+++ The PC is crap!

According to a recent *Which?* Report, the PC, PC software, peripherals and computers in general don't work properly, are unreliable, "bug-ridden" and "abominable".

Richard Wentk, author of the *Which? Guide To Computers*, maintains that: "If washing machines, cars and video recorders went on the market with the same reliability problems, the public outcry would be deafening."

The report went on to blame High Street retailers for charging too much and offering poor customer support, and urged consumers to complain when things went wrong. But please don't ring us, okay?

Tactical World Of Soccer

DEVELOPER BLACK LEGEND HAS BEEN BUSY OF LATE developing four new products for the PC due for release between now and next year.

Tactical World Of Soccer is yet another football management sim snapping at the heels of the rather super *Championship Manager 2*. The game features full data on over 700 clubs (European, Japanese and South American), as well as 'Golden Oldies' (such as Liverpool '78 and New York Cosmos '82 etc) and 16 national sides and templates for fantasy and custom-made clubs. All the club data is accurate (right down to the address, capacity and nickname) and around 20 up-to-date players are included in each team, with a full description, stats, caps, market valuation and current transfer status. Managers can click on any of the 22,400 players and instead of just looking at their career assessment records, they can edit them, enter new comments about players' performances, and squirm at the nice mugshot. This database can then be called up at any time and perused at will. As a bonus, the engine driving the match simulation can also be used to give an intelligent forecast of each match, and even be used to predict pools results. Because players can key in the starting line-ups (leaving out injured and suspended players, for example) and adjust formations and tactics, when the simulation actually starts to calculate the results of the match it is working with 'real' data and the current values, and as a result, the forecast is more accurate than any other simulation.

TWOS also supports a fully customisable league planner (club names, data and logos can all be customised) and full league results, weekly schedules and charts can be generated as the season progresses. There's also a rather extensive (and comprehensive) play-by-mail facility.

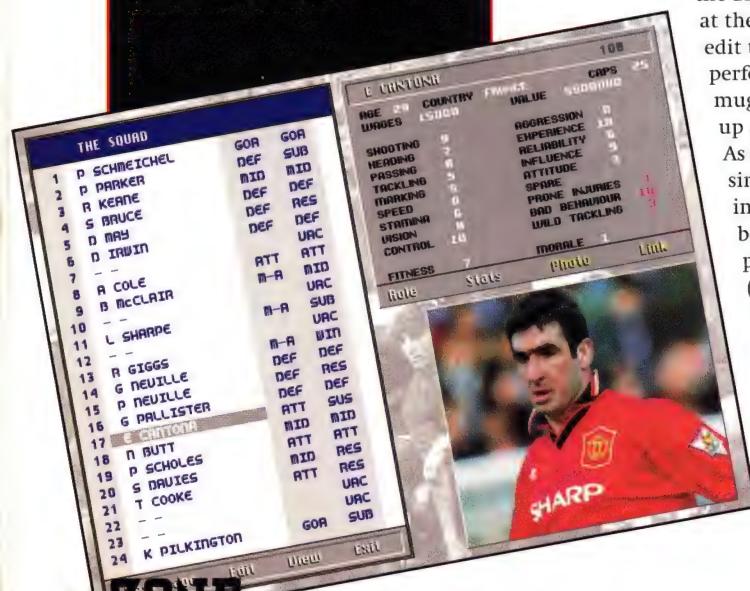
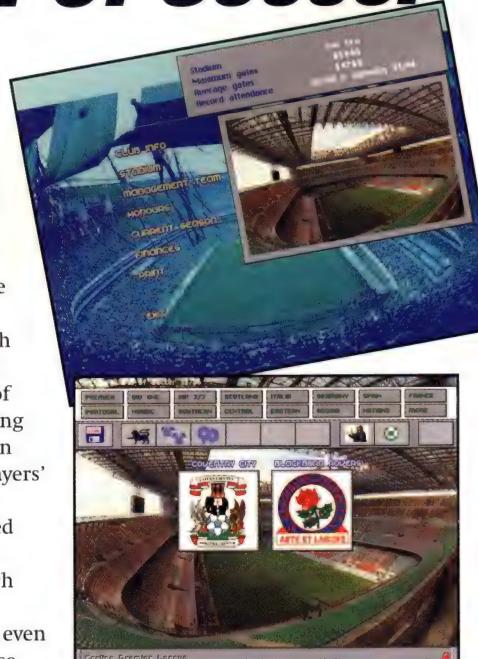
Tactical World Of Soccer is due for release in the new year from Black Legend.

Time travellers

WEIRDY game plot of the month award just has to go to Infogrames for its new adventure game, *Time Gate*.

Looking remarkably like *Alone In The Dark*, the game is based around a young American student in Paris called William who answers a cry for help from a knight from the past. The reluctant hero then has to go back in time, solve lots of puzzles, rescue his girlfriend Juliette, defeat some baddie bloke called Wolfram, and then make his way back to his own time – nightmare, eh? Anyway, the game looks absolutely gorgeous from what we saw. It looks even better than *Prisoner Of Ice*, Infogrames' latest, and may even prove to be a real contender for the king of adventure games throne, which is currently held by Infogrames' very own *Alone In The Dark* series.

Above all else, it's good to see that some publishing houses haven't forgotten that it's gameplay that really counts in adventure games, rather than yawn movie clips used to thinly disguise the fact that this most important element is completely lacking. *Time Gate* will be released in November.



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Tower Of Souls

BLACK LEGEND HAS JUST PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO Tower Of Souls, which proved to be an enormous hit on the Amiga 1200.

The new and 'enhanced' PC CD-ROM version features larger and more detailed sprites, on-screen explanation of objects, animated textures, 'virtual joystick' mouse and keyboard control, a rendered intro sequence and full speech. The game is split into 125 map areas and features loads of puzzles, hidden rooms, weapons, spells and NPCs and should appeal to hardened RPG fans. Players must explore the massive player environment and search out seven crystals hidden by the demon Baalhathrock, while gathering vital objects to help them on their quest. Best described as an *Ultima Underworld* meets *Dungeon & Dragons* clone, Tower Of Souls might look a bit dated when compared to the likes of *Hexen* or even *Crusader* from EA, but it is still a massive step up from the original Amiga version. Tower Of Souls is due for release next month.

Also on the way from Black Legend is an isometric strategy sim called *Colony Wars 2492*. From what we've seen so far, it's pretty standard strategy fare, though there is going to be a hi-res mode and three different geographical locations (desert, jungle and ice) to conquer and the game purportedly boasts a wicked AI. *Colony Wars 2492* is due for release early next year.



« Dispatches

+++ Are Virtua Fighter & Daytona USA on their way to the PC?

Shock horror! Hit Sega Saturn titles such as *Virtua Fighter* and *Daytona USA* could soon be available on the PC, following a deal between console giants Sega and California-based start-up company NVIDIA.

NVIDIA claims that its NV1 single chip 'multimedia accelerator' board delivers the "photo-realistic 3D graphics, video-based special effects, full motion video acceleration and concurrent high-fidelity audio" required to port Saturn titles onto the PC. Sega has given the NVIDIA technology its blessing and has announced that a number of Saturn games will be produced for Pentium PCs equipped with the NV1 accelerator and running Windows 95. The new chip will be available to PC manufacturers and add-in card suppliers in time for them to push out NV1 compatible products before Christmas. Although Sega has not named any specific titles to accompany the release, the aforementioned *Virtua Fighter* and *Daytona USA* are hotly tipped to be the first of many, and Sega US predicts that PC CD-ROMs could account for up to a quarter of Sega's games business by the end of the decade.

+++ Dani does games

Developers Crush! has managed to persuade animal lover and all round good time gal Dani Behr to do the voice bits for its forthcoming strategy blaster *Mortal Coil*.

Dani plays the character of Candy – a well-armed mercenary type chick employed as part of a crack team to investigate strange goings-on at key R&D establishments on Earth. TV legend Ed Bishop raises the celebrity voice quotient still further, by narrating the story, while he also plays the character of Dan, a rugged marine and team mate of Candy.

If you can't remember what *Mortal Coil* is all about, then check out the preview we did a couple of months back, or wait until next month when we'll have a full review.



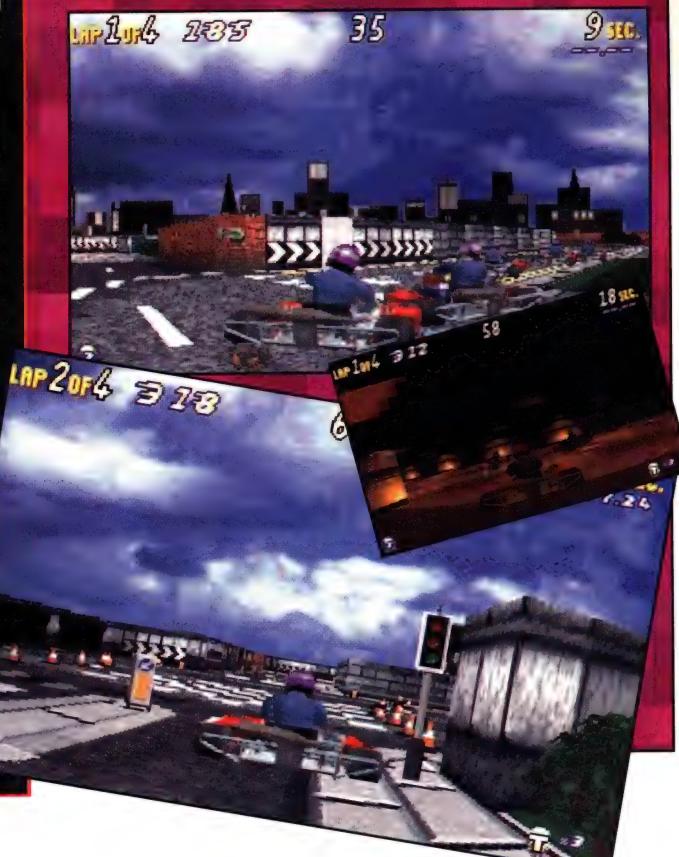
Manic Karts

A new and re-vamped version of *Super Karts* is on the way very shortly, courtesy of Manic Media and Virgin Interactive.

Manic Karts features the same frenetic gameplay of the original, but now sports improved graphics, more tracks and a much tighter engine to give you increased control and a greater sense of speed. *Manic Karts* still oozes playability from every pore, just as the original game did, and basically looks and plays much better for the Manic make-over. Multi-player racing (over a network) and a two-player split screen option combine to make this one of the best racing games available, and if you're the lucky owner of a VFX-1 virtual reality headset, you'll be blowing chunks in no time.

And here's the best news of all (we saved it 'till last): the new and improved *Manic Karts* can be purchased from your friendly game store for around £20.

To find out more about *Manic Karts*, contact Virgin Interactive Entertainment on 0171-368 2255.



TV versus Fury 3

It would seem that the *Fury 3* versus *Terminal Velocity* battle is going to rage on... and on... and on.

A computer trade publication recently quoted our very own Features Editor, Chris Anderson, as saying that the two games were identical and that after playing the shareware version of *Terminal Velocity* he thought it was unlikely that many gamers were going to go out and buy *Fury 3*.

Well, to settle the debate, we went out, grabbed an innocent pedestrian off the street, and forced him to play both games until his brain imploded! Here is his final, indisputable, *translated* comment on the matter:

"ERRRRRR... Both games are good man, there's no real difference. Any differences are really only superficial. Okay, the graphics are slightly more detailed in *Fury 3*, but as a result there are regular pauses during the game for data accessing. If I had to buy one of them, I'd go for *Terminal Velocity*. There are a few things in it that make it more appealing to me, and it's a better deal. I've played the shareware version off my *PC Zone* cover disc, and to be honest I'd stick with that."

So that's the word from the street (literally) or according to Alasdair from Stoke Newington. Over to you Bill...



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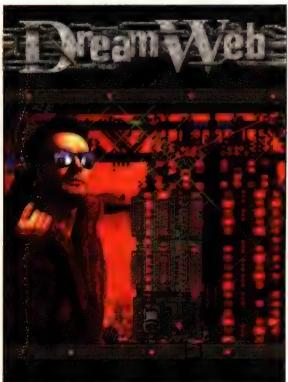
CANNON FODDER

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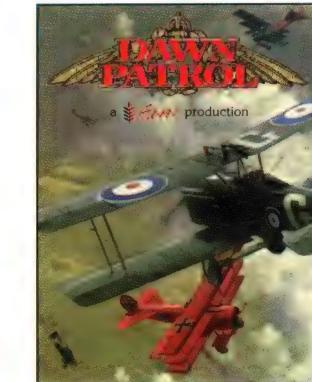
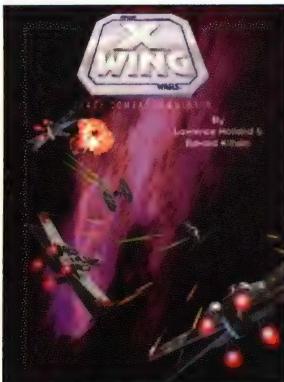
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Wanted: experienced guitar hero

Okay guys and gals, prepare to be amazed, US Gold has got something coming your way which looks pretty special. *Johnny Bazookatone* is the world's first silicon graphics rendered platform game and it looks like it could be just the thing to cheer you up in the wake of the PlayStation blitz currently sweeping the UK. It's even got an incredibly wacky storyline to match the zany animations for the characters. You play Johnny Bazookatone, the world's greatest rock 'n' roll hero. L. Diablo, the game's big baddie, is jealous of Johnny's fame and nicks Anita, Johnny's fabbo guitar. When he discovers the guitar alone is not enough to turn him into an instant rock 'n' roll star he decides the world will never again groove to Johnny's cool tunes. Your task is to travel to L. Diablo's homeworld and rescue Anita, thus bringing peace and harmony back to the world. If the plot sounds a bit crap, it's probably because it is. It hardly matters though, if you can get your hands on a platform game that looks as good as this one does. *Johnny Bazookatone* should be out before Christmas. For more details call US Gold on 0121-625 3388.

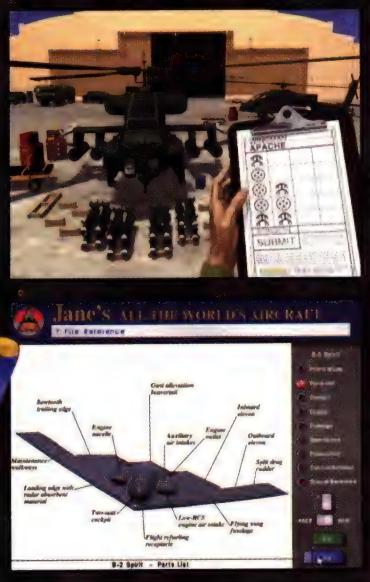


Two Sims from EA and Jane's

Electronic Arts has recently released further details of the first two products which will be released soon under the exclusive Jane's license.

As we mentioned in last month's Bulletin, both *AH-64D* and *Advanced Tactical Fighters* will feature accurately modelled avionics, photo-realistic SVGA terrains and the possibility of a head-to-head option. What will appeal to the real propeller heads of course will be the fact that both titles will feature extremely techy bits reproduced from the massively informative Jane's publications.

Both *AH-64D* and *Advanced Tactical Fighters* are due for release in December.



The Beast returns

FANS OF THE INDISPENSABLY FAB *GABRIEL KNIGHT* ADVENTURE from Sierra will no doubt be tickled pink to know that *Gabriel Knight 2: The Beast Within*, will be upon us before Christmas. Judging by Sierra's press release, the plot of the new game will be spookily similar to that of the original to start with, before wildly careering off on a completely new adventure. The game centres around Gabriel and his sidekick Grace, who find themselves mixed up in dodgy goings-on involving werewolves and other creepy types. In keeping with Sierra's alarming new trend of making 'movies' and not games, the whole thing will be photo-realistic and camera angle-tastic. The game was 'shot' by Hollywood director Will Binder and features over 1,000 colour-saturated photographic backgrounds which, incredible though it may seem, 'blend seamlessly with film performances by the actors to create a realistic and believable world'. We at PC Zone hope that the game will not turn out to be similar in any way shape or form to seven disc'er *Phantasmagoria* (ie lots of pretty scenes and no puzzles). Features Ed Chris reckons *Gabriel Knight 2* is definitely one of his fave games ever (after *UFO*, of course) and is threatening to go down to Sierra and taunt them mercilessly if *Gabriel Knight 2* doesn't come up to scratch. If you need more info give Sierra a ring on 01734 303322.



Christmas Computer Shopper Show

+++ Yes, it's that time of year again when every discerning bargain hunter braves the sleet and rain of wintry London to make their way to the Grand Hall, Olympia in search of bargains, advice and a bit of gaming mayhem.

By far the most popular stand (of course) will be the *PC Zone Leisure Zone*. Visitors to the show will not only be able to chat and joke with the world's most witty, handsome and stunningly honest games journalists that ever lived, but try out the latest games before they part with their hard-earned wads of cash at one of the numerous bargain establishments littered about the massive hall.

But we're not just talking about new games here - we're talking about nail biting, cuticle chewing, multi-player network games galore, in the shape of *Screamer*, *IndyCar 2*, *Duke Nukem*, *Terminal Velocity* and *Command & Conquer* to name but a few. We'll also be running loads of competitions, giving away heaps of freebies and selling the very latest and extremely hot off the presses, not available anywhere else January edition of the UK's biggest selling games magazine.

The Christmas Computer Shopper Show, Grand Hall, Olympia, London takes place from 30 November to 3 December 1995. Call the ticket office on 0171-244 0244 or send off the advance ticket request coupon from the ad in this issue and save up to 33% off normal ticket prices. You'd be foolish not to...



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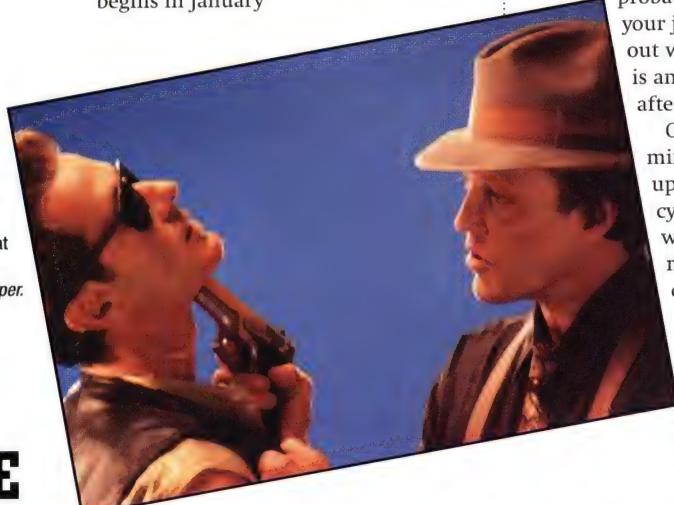


**After a little bit of a
shaky first half of the year,
Gametek is set to hit
Christmas and beyond with
all sorts of new products.**

AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THE REVIEWS section this month, we've finally gotten our hands on a reviewable copy of the follow-up to last year's incredibly successful *Quarantine*, *Road Warrior*. Aside from this and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, it's unfortunate that the past six months have been marred with unfortunate events for Gametek. Thankfully the *Frontier: First Encounters* fiasco has now been laid to rest (ie everyone who wanted a copy bought it... and then got very stroppy about it) and *Cyberbykes* (stop sniggering at the back) is one of those games that, well, you've got to laugh, haven't you?

Ripper

Although things have already perked up a bit with *Road Warrior*, the real fun begins in January



(Right) Christopher Walken sticks a gun up against someone's throat and attempts to look hard in *Ripper*.

when the firm's first proper interactive movie/adventure thingy hits in the shape of *Ripper*. Although it hasn't enjoyed much media attention so far, this one could turn out to be quite splendid when it's finally unveiled.

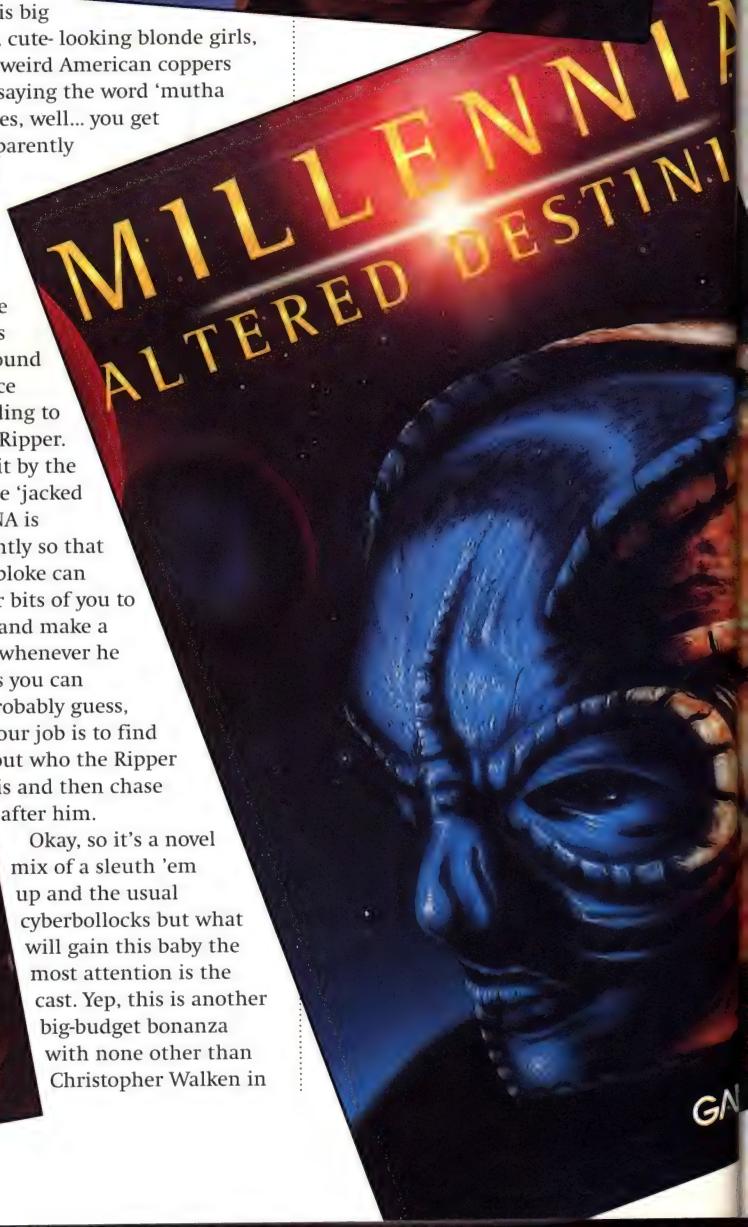
Basically a futuristic cops 'n' bad guys adventure, the story deals with all kinds of grotesque murders (including some excellent bits where a big fat bloke's intestines fall out of his big wobbly gut), cute-looking blonde girls, cyberspace, weird American coppers and people saying the word 'mutha fu...' - yes, yes, well... you get the gist. Apparently some weird geezer has been reading far too many Conan Doyle books and is hanging around in cyberspace and pretending to be Jack the Ripper. If you get hit by the Ripper while 'jacked in', your DNA is altered slightly so that old weirdy bloke can then trigger bits of you to burst open and make a nasty mess whenever he wants to. As you can

probably guess, your job is to find out who the Ripper is and then chase after him.

Okay, so it's a novel mix of a sleuth 'em up and the usual cyberbollocks but what will gain this baby the most attention is the cast. Yep, this is another big-budget bonanza with none other than Christopher Walken in

one of the starring roles alongside Raquel Welch's daughter, John 'FMV' Rhys-Davies and a host of others.

As an added bonus for those of you old and crumbly enough to



appreciate this, the sound track is the original Blue Oyster Cult version of *Don't Fear The Reaper*. Cool.

Millennia

Aside from Ripper, which will obviously be a pretty popular game for reasons that are more than apparent, the other biggie from Gametek this Chrimbo is *Millennia* - a weird and wonderful blend of *Wing Commander*, *Commander Blood* and virtually any resource management title you could care to mention.

The whole thing is based on a planet that is dying... fast. In a vain attempt to save the life that lives on this planet you play the role of a sort of intergalactic god thing who travels through both time and space taking certain types of life from the dying planet to other celestial bodies. By placing certain life forms on certain planets you can ensure that all life survives and everything gets a chance of evolving into something worthwhile.

Okay, fair enough, but things get extra complicated when you find that certain species can only survive in certain planetary environments and can only be 'planted' at certain periods in history. As a result the game has you watching multiple time lines and tracking the progress of all different kinds of life from Reptilian to Humanoid.

As an added hindrance, there's also a race of malevolent anti-god type aliens who are going out of their way to completely arse everything up, and who are keen to keep shooting at you at every available opportunity.

the project are keen to stress that the gameplay is enhanced by the addition of a number of random elements.Like many other point-and-clickers at the moment, this blends a number of new ideas into the traditional recipe by adding role-playing elements. Characters move around the environment independently and you can bump into them all around the playing area as they get on with their business.

The Compelling Adventures Of A.Gent is currently slated for a late 95/early 96 release. We'll be bringing you a review as soon as we can.

This is certainly a game for those of you who like your games a bit more cerebral, but the nature of the presentation and the sheer depth of gameplay means that *Millennia* really has the potential to be a surprise hit this Christmas. Hopefully, we'll be bringing you a full review of the game next month.

The Compelling Adventures Of A.Gent

Continuing the sleuthy feel to Gametek's range is the cunningly titled *The Compelling Adventures Of A.Gent*, a point-and-click adventure set in 1940's America. Playing the part of a private dick (oops, cheap knob joke there) your mission is to solve a number of murders which have been committed in a government building.

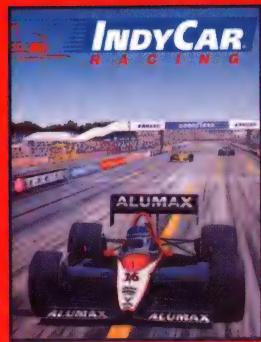
Blending cartoon-style graphics with a typically Dick Tracy/Spillane type narrative the game manages to conjure up a cool feeling of 1940's detective stories.

As you'd expect from this sort of game, *A.Gent* is filled with puzzles and tasks to perform, and the team behind

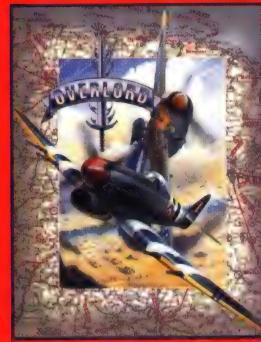
Escalation

The last game we've had a quick peek at from Gametek is something of a departure for the firm. Rather than the more action/adventure style games we're used to, this is a pure and simple strategy game which conjures up an almost Risk-style feel.

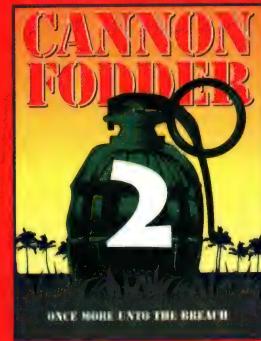
Set in the future, *Escalation* is a mixture of resource management, strategy and combat which involves two warring factions battling for control of an archipelago of randomly generated islands. The game relies on the more traditional strategy (argh hex-game!) elements common to many of SSI's old products as opposed to anything new and flash like *Millennia*, but it does feature a rather smart multi-player network game option that has been designed to work on both PC and Apple Macintosh based office networks. **Z**



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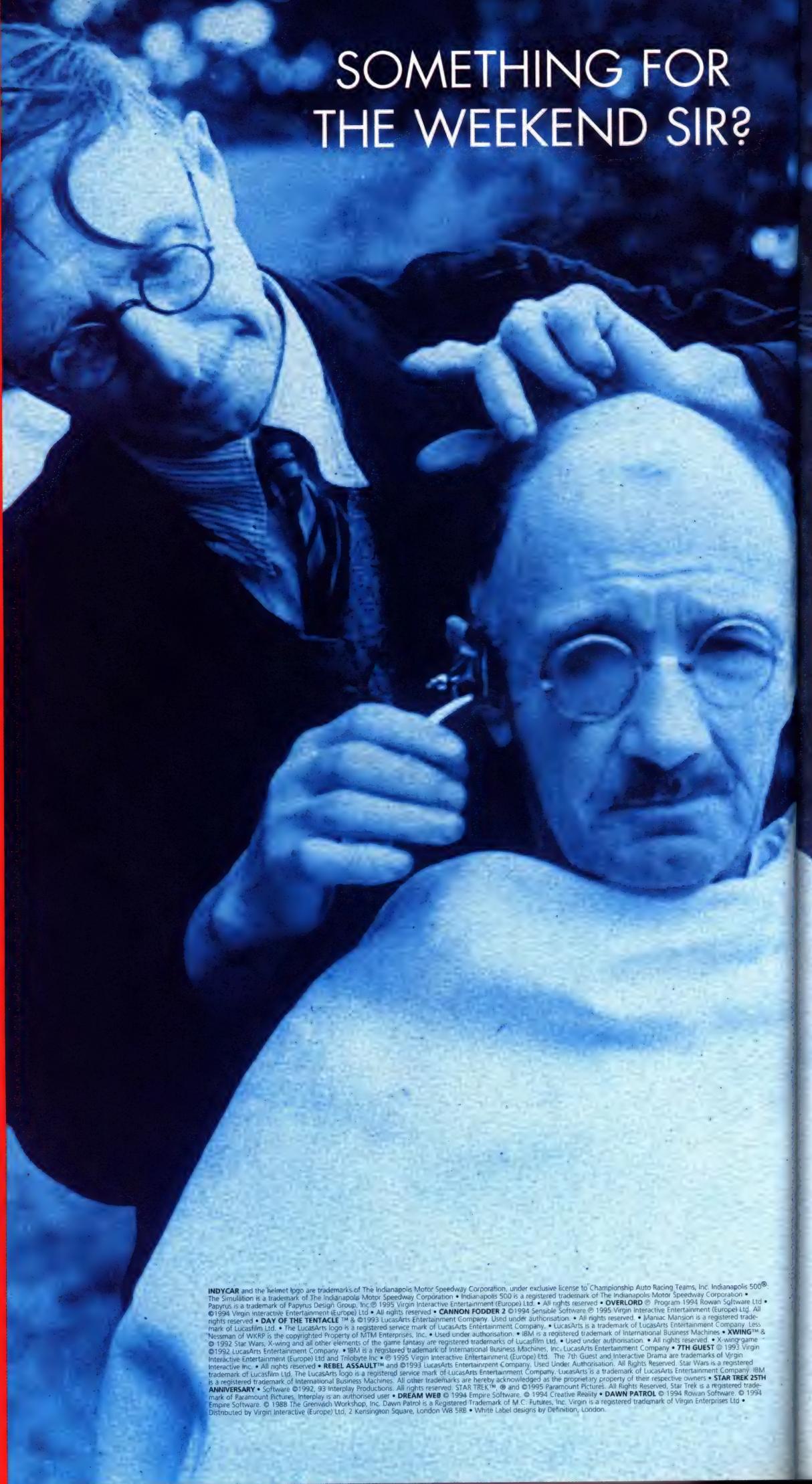


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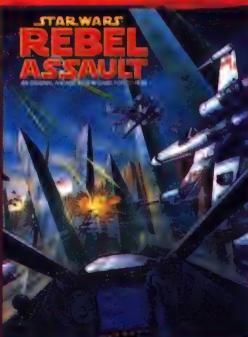
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HERE ARE ONLY A FEW DEVELOPERS that have the ability to make the entire staff of PC Zone go all gooey whenever they demo a new product. Obviously iD has an uncanny ability to do clever things from time to time, but Bullfrog has developed this ludicrous knack of making any new project a damn sight more impressive than anything they've done before. In the past we've obviously gone bananas over the likes of *Theme Park* and *Magic Carpet*, and

only last month, dearest Macca spooged all over *Magic Carpet 2: Hidden Worlds* and gave it 92 per cent. To say that *Dungeon Keeper* looks a bit smart would be something of an understatement. When we originally had the thing demo'd to us a couple of months ago there was a seriously sad situation where three of us sat in front of a PC watching Peter Molyneux playing the game – and we all looked as though we were about to start dribbling.

Sim Dungeon

Unlike many titles that we look at these days, this is one of the few occasions where we can honestly say that this game is totally unlike any other. Wow.



(Left) Here we have an excellent example of the 3D engine's crooked walls and uneven ceilings. (Above) A scene from the brilliant rendered intro sequence.

Doesn't happen often. This is great for you as games players but for me, to write a preview about it, means I can't really compare it to anything else. So I'll just describe it.

Okay... so you've got this dungeon right. And you happen to be the dungeon keeper, the boss-man, the head honcho, the top-dog, the man with a plan, the... you get the picture. Now the basic idea of the game is that you have to run this dungeon as a practical and on-going business. As you'd expect in mythical fantasy land, or wherever it is that all this takes place, the existence of a dungeon attracts all manner of heroes to have a crack at nicking the treasure that's inevitably hidden at the centre. So, as well as running your dungeon, you also have to make sure that all the heroes get killed off in the most horrible way possible so that you can hang onto your goodies.



Dungeon Keeper

A new Bullfrog game is always something of a treat, but *Dungeon Keeper* has to be one of the team's most impressive projects ever. John Davison takes a look at what could be the next 'really big thing'.



IN
PREVIEW



The game starts with you looking at a very simple map of the catacombs. You have a room where all your mana (like the stuff in *Magic Carpet*) is stored (this is your 'treasure'), a room where magical monsties can be formed, a library where the more intelligent creatures can go and study new spells and stuff, and finally you have a door. Pretty important this, as it's here that the heroes enter the dungeon and it's also where the creatures that you hire from *Monsties 'R' Us* will trundle in from.

Okay, that's the physical stuff out of the way, but there's more. The whole thing doesn't just stay like this you see. Although you only start off with a petite and bijou dungeonette you can add new rooms and corridors to the map by employing the services of imps who act as construction workers. Obviously though, you can only add rooms if you have enough money – and this is where the resource management aspect of the game comes in.

At the beginning of the game you have a predetermined amount of money and mana to 'spend' in order to make your dungeon as nasty and 'orrible as possible. Mana points determine the ambient magical temperature of your dungeon and this determines what kinds of weird and wonderful creatures you can summon to defend the place.

(Above) The rendered intro is one of the best that Bullfrog has come up with so far.

(Right) This is mana central... it's the weird round thing that looks a bit like that thing the Queen sometimes wanders around with. The white thing with the sparkly trail is some mana that has been sucked out of a dead hero. Yum.

(Bottom right) This is what the little buggers get up to if you leave 'em alone for too long. Skiving bastards the lot of 'em.



Although things start off with fairly boring and mundane impy, demony monsties, you soon find that you can summon some nasty bastards. By collecting the souls of dead heroes you'll soon have enough loopy juice to summon up wizards, vampires, ghouls, ghosts and weird horrible fat, slobby, sweaty things.

Flashy bits from Bullfrog

Okay, so in theory it's all hunky-dory and wonderful. It's a nice twist on the old tabletop *D&D* thang, but it is all rather flash. Rather than a boring and completely mundane top-down scrolling map layout, *Dungeon Keeper* makes use of one of the flashiest, and yes, downright sexy graphics engines you've ever seen.

"You can log-off but leave your dungeon up and running. The AI will play the game just like you would. It's scary."

The aim of the game is basically to keep your dungeon running while expanding and earning more money and mana. Bog standard trolls and goblins need to be kept happy by allowing them to feed and sleep (as well as paying them a wage) while magical creatures need to be sustained in other ways. And that's it... it's sort of a bit like being the dungeon master in the old tabletop *D&D* games but with lots of fancy bits thrown in as well.

Based loosely on the forthcoming *Syndicate Wars* graphics system, the main part of *Dungeon Keeper* comprises a scrolling texture-mapped polygon environment that can be rotated and twisted around in order to be viewed from any angle. For added flashiness the system makes use of Bullfrog's impressive light-sourcing system which not only gives damn spectacular looking 'glowy bits' wherever there's a burning torch, but also casts 'real' shadows. Coo.



! The Dungeon Keepers

(From left to right) Peter Molyneux (Producer), Russell Shaw (Musician), Barry Meade (Level Designer), Simon Carter (Lead Programmer), Mark Healey (Artist), Glenn Corpes (Engine Designer), Sean Masterson (Level Designer), Darren Thomas (Artist)



SCENES

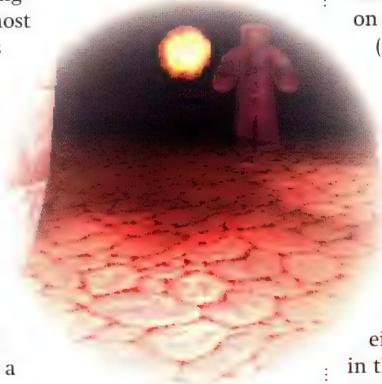


That's not all though. Oh no. Not satisfied with just having one really smart looking graphics engine, the team has put another one in as well. You see, if you don't think that one of your creatures is doing a particularly good job of looking after itself you can actually enter its body and view the world from its eyes. The resulting view makes use of one of the most impressive 3D graphics engines you've ever seen. Imagine *Magic Carpet*, but better, and with a lid on the top so that it's all enclosed and dungeon-like (odd that, innit?). Every creature is 'simulated' effectively so if you're 'in' a dirty great big stonking monster your view of the world changes accordingly. If you possess a spider you crawl along the ground, if you possess a fly you nip around just like you do in *Magic Carpet*. Cool-ola or what?

Beyond clever

As we go to press there is still a lot of work being done on *Dungeon Keeper*. The bulk of the graphics work is virtually complete but there are a lot of features

(Right) The use of light-sourcing is unlike any other game you've seen. Each light-source casts a shadow that looks 'real'.



(Bottom right) The number of options you have is really quite staggering and there are all sorts of magical bits and bobs that you can fiddle with.

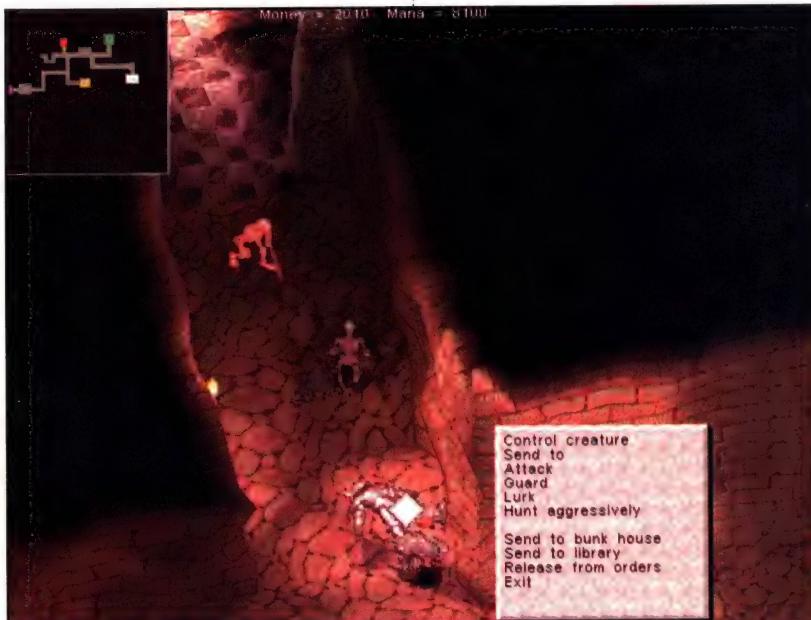
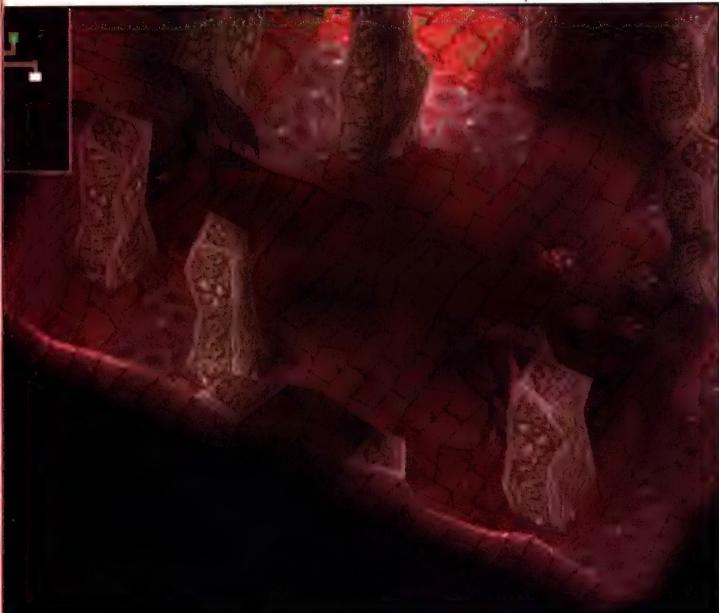


under discussion that are yet to be implemented. While speaking to both Simon Carter (the lead programmer on the project) and Peter Molyneux (the producer, and top-dog at Bullfrog) we learnt that the multi-player features of the game are still under development. It seems that the final version of the game will be able to be played as both a network game and as an Internet-based game. Fine, fair enough... so what?

Ah, well there's a clever bit, you see. Not only can you play as either a hero or a dungeon keeper in the multi-player version, but you can also allow your PC to 'learn' how you play. This means that if you are playing with a group on the Internet and, say, your mum/partner screams bloody murder about how your tea has been ready for several days now and is still going cold on the table, you can log-off but actually leave your dungeon

up and running. However, rather than just sitting there as a big empty dungeon, the AI will be smart enough to continue to play the game, just like you would. Wow. Think about it. It's scary. If you tend to summon up lots of wizards and then protect them with goblins, the computer will continue to play in this way until you take over again at a later date. Is that just way beyond clever or what?

Despite the fact that *Dungeon Keeper* is not actually finished yet, Bullfrog has high hopes for the next few weeks of production and is aiming to get the game in the shops before Christmas. As long as all goes according to plan we'll be able to bring you a full review of this new title next month along with an extremely special, unmissable Bullfrog competition. Rest assured, you WANT to buy next month's mag because we're going to be giving away a prize unlike anything you've ever seen before. **Z**



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NOVA



LOGIC

3

CLASSIC
NOVALOGIC
GAMES

IndyCar Racing 2

IndyCar finally gets the **NASCAR** treatment and then some. **Jeremy Wells** went along for the ride to see just what's new chez Papyrus.



(Top) The graphics are obviously an improvement – clear and crisp 640x480 resolution is now a reality on a modest Pentium, even if you do have to turn the grass off.

(Above) There's an improved replay feature that allows you to switch cameras and cut and paste bits of your finest racing hour. You're so sad!

(Right) 15 tracks, the paint kit and all the 1995 season cars and drivers are all included, so no more add-on rip-offs!

PAPYRUS IS ENJOYING SOMETHING of an enviable reputation for producing the best racing sims on the PC – not bad at all for a company that's responsible for just three PC products to date. *Indianapolis 500*, the original *IndyCar Racing* and *NASCAR* were all greeted with a bombardment of superlatives when they were released, and within just a very short time, Papyrus' flagship product *IndyCar* established itself as the racing sim to beat (ahem).

NASCAR again set the standard, but was notoriously processor-hungry, especially in SVGA mode which required you to switch off just about everything but your machine to get it past chuggsville – even on a high-end Pentium. And then there were all those jokes about driving around in circles all the time. Not exactly much in the way of variety,

but plenty to be getting on with in the way of car set-up,

while the 'arcade' kind of exterior views were a nice addition for those who just liked to drive around the track the wrong way and cause massive pile-ups.

I always preferred *IndyCar* myself. A kid called Johnny Herbert used to live just down the road from me when I was but knee-high to a Raleigh Chopper bike; I'd like to say I could fondly recall long hot summer days pinching wood from building sites and making go-karts with young Johnny, but I can't so I won't. And I know F1 isn't *IndyCar*, but it's closer than NASCAR. And a lot faster.

The all new *IndyCar*...

So what's new? Well, this time round there's an SVGA mode, and hoorah for those who don't own a P133 (which, incidentally, still couldn't cope with NASCAR with all the detail turned on in hi-res mode) – the frame rate has been bumped up by over 70 per cent so it runs quite acceptably in hi-res with most of the detail on high (who needs asphalt anyway?) on a P75. In VGA mode it's speed-city with all the juicy scenery glowering in the American sunlight. Speaking of which, there are now new billboards, campers, buildings and 'objects'. The producer tells me the artists have spent ages getting the textures to the crash barriers just right, so when you're flying towards them at zoomph you can really appreciate what it actually looks like to go head-on with a real piece of bendy metal.

They've also spent ages re-doing the tracks and making them even more detailed and, unlike before, the game comes complete with all 15 of 'em, so

Product details

Developer: Papyrus

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Telephone: 0171-368 2255

Format: CD-ROM (Windows 95 and DOS)

Release date: December

no more tacky track-pack rip-offs. They've even thrown in the paint kit too. Generous to a fault is Papyrus.

Handle with care

Of course, what the real fans of the original will be wanting to know is what's been done to make it more realistic. *IndyCar* was always meant to be a simulation rather than a jaunty arcade-style racer, and as a result you were severely punished if you even thought about attempting any *Ridge Racer*-style manoeuvres in your delicately responsive missile on wheels. *IndyCar* was designed to handle like a real IndyCar and that's why it was tops.

Tug too much on the wheel and the car wouldn't just spin into the barrier and miraculously right itself in a nanosecond, it would spin and spin, and then spin some more and then eventually come to a halt against one of the crash barriers, looking very much worse for wear. Crashes were always spectacular, and a definite high point of the game – even if the only bit that flew off your car into the crowd was the odd wheel, it was still rather impressive. Well, now it's even more impressive. Just try turning your little baby round





and going back round the track à la Duncan MacDonald and you'll not only see wheels flying through the air, but nose cones, spoilers and back axles when you pile into the oncoming pack. What's more, cars will not only fall to bits, but they'll feature crumpled bits and dents too. Papyrus has even added a random engine blow-up option to keep Ferrari fans happy. How thoughtful.

Of course the cars handle more realistically too. The development team has spent aeons making it even more true to life and assures me that it's the closest possible thing to the real thing. I'm inclined to believe them because they seemed to know just about everything there is to know about car set-ups and enjoyed re-telling a number of in *IndyCar* jokes while they were talking me through the improved game: "...Yeah, and Brian, well he had his car set up like, like he was totally screwed (man!) - and he thought he was gonna whip my arse no problem. You shoulda seen his face when I took him on the 27th lap. It was beautiful (man!) -

hahahahah! I told him to switch compounds for... etc, etc." And as I think they're on a pretty safe bet (like how many people have sat in a real *IndyCar*, let alone driven one?), I decided to go with the flow and give them the benefit of the doubt.

Anything else?

Well, the sound's been beefed up a bit, including the 'arcade' style out of car views, and it's all been updated as far as sponsors, billboards and (of course) drivers and cars are concerned. Oh yes, and there are going to be different versions for DOS, Windows 95 and PowerMac. The Windows 95 version (apart from being a bit quicker than the DOS one) will sport slightly different menu systems (the DOS version will look and operate pretty much the same as the original in an attempt to maintain some consistency), and both will support head-to-head racing. Multi-player network racing will not be supported yet, but might be in the future. Papyrus already operates its own 37-way dial-in network in the States



(Above) Outside views give the game an 'arcade' feel, but don't expect the cars to handle like toys.

(Above left) The all new Windows 95 version will feature slightly different menus and will be a bit faster - allegedly.

(which has proved extremely popular so far) and it's not keen to hand over the opportunity of setting up a similar system over here to a rival: it wants to do it itself - properly.

The other significant area to have been improved is the AI (Artificial Intelligence) of the computer driven cars. They now behave much more realistically and act as if they've been away on a defensive driving course. You'll still be able to switch the number of cars and their capability down, but when you're racing full-on, expect a much rougher ride than before.

Of course, by the time *IndyCar* 2 is released, Geoff Crammond's *F1GP* will no doubt be at the top of the gaming charts, so Papyrus is well aware that it's going to have to produce something pretty special to beat it.

I'll give the last word to game designer Adam Levesque: "I enjoyed playing the original *F1GP* and I've seen what he (Geoff Crammond) is doing, and I've gotta say I'm impressed. But I'm also impressed with what the guys back at Papyrus are doing too. Obviously I'm biased and you can't expect me to be totally objective here, but I think it's gonna be a close thing. It's good that we've got something to aim for. At the end of the day it means you (the gamer) will get two incredibly brilliant - but different - racing sims. You pays your money and you takes your choice." Z

(Left) Meet the Papyrus team - they're smiling 'cos it's always sunny in America and they just luv the all new *IndyCar* 2.

(Below) We want a multi-player network facility and we want it now! But we'll have to wait.



BEHIND
THE
SCENES



Pro Pinball: The Web

Perhaps we shouldn't have given the new pinball-fest from Empire to tilt-crazy

Chris Anderson
- it looks like the combination of flipper action and excellent soundtrack is just a bit too much for him...

USUALLY IT'S PRETTY HARD TO GET excited about the prospect of previewing a pinball game for the PC - let's face it, we've seen tons of them. 21st Century alone has released about a million of the things, inspiring countless other software houses to get in on the act, the latest of which is Empire Interactive.

But before I get to the one very good reason why *Pro Pinball* deserves your attention above all the other games of its type, I first want to point out that having seen a fair amount of it, I'm now in what I'd consider a good position to judge it. My first encounter with the game was at the ECTS, where I spent an hour on the Empire stand playing it (and drinking lots of rum, which the Empire team insisted I downed in one every time. Poor me, eh?).

I saw it again during a meeting here at the PC Zone office, and after a couple more hours of playing it, looking at it,

and asking interesting questions about it, I managed to while away three hours down the pub talking about the bloody thing (and er, getting a bit pissed). So if you're going to ask anyone about *Pro Pinball*, come and see me, okay?

Sound sense

Anyway, back to the reason *Pro Pinball* reaches the parts that other pinball games don't reach: the soundtrack is absolutely bastard groovy. Even if the game itself was crap (although as you've probably gathered by now, it's damned good), you'd still want to play it just from hearing the soundtrack. What you hear while you're hammering away at the flippers is not crap country and western rubbish, nor is it '50s dance music or pleasant and polite pop stuff. Oh no. Instead it's good old-fashioned

ass-kicking rock 'n' roll, courtesy of Bruce Foxton (remember *The Jam*? Hey, how could you possibly forget?) and Jake Burns, both playing for the new-look *Stiff Little Fingers*. To be honest, with guys like this supplying the sounds, there's no way you can go wrong.

In addition to all the super music, you also get a pretty neat pinball game to play around with too. The visuals are silicon graphic-tastic, with multiple viewing angles and stupidly high resolution of up to 1024x768 with over 32,000 colours - and all this at a ridiculously fast 60 frames per second. There are several different game modes, including Space Station Frenzy, Bike Race Challenge, Fast Frenzy, the Ultimate Showdown, and lots of hidden features and arcade games besides. For those of you interested in the 'proper' pinball bits in the game, you'll be pleased to know it has three flippers, two ramps, loops, orbits, targets, grab magnets, drop targets and... and.. lots of other pinball things as well.

In summary, *Pro Pinball* is a great-looking game with lots of features and a superb soundtrack. I confidently predict it will blow the competition away when it comes out at the end of this month. **Z**

Product details

Developer: Empire Interactive

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Telephone: 0181-343 7337

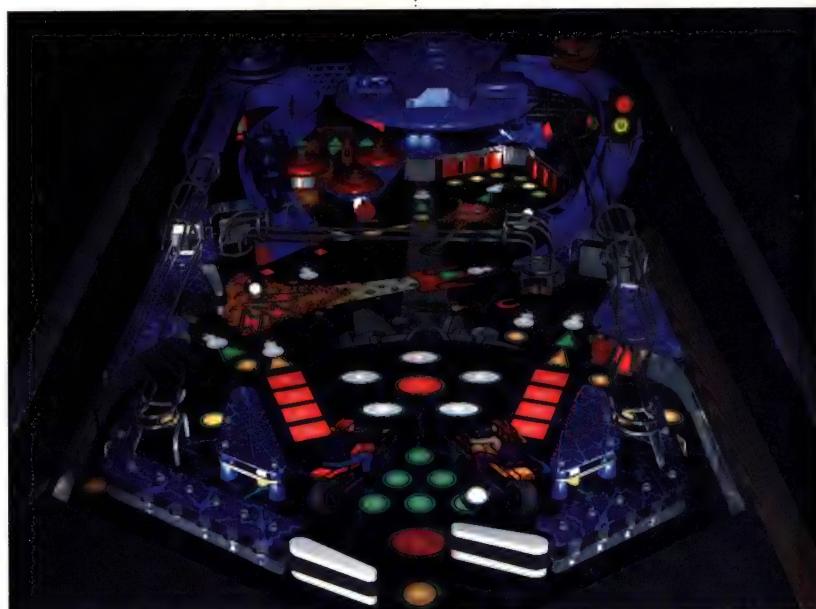
Format: CD-ROM

Release date: November



(Above) The groovy soundtrack was written by Bruce Foxton and Jake Burns of *Stiff Little Fingers*.

(Far right) This is the hi-res mode - it looks great and you don't need a Pentium to get the most out of it.



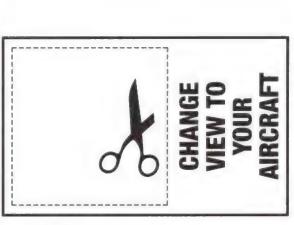
PC ZONE

Navy Strike from Empire Interactive is the latest flight sim to be developed by Rowan Software and is the first modern warfare/jet fighter simulator to use the *Dawn Patrol* graphics engine.

TAB	SPEED UP TIME	T	AUTO FIRING
P	PAUSE	[LOOK UP
SPACE	FIRE]	LOOK DOWN

ZOOM IN	ROTATE VERTICALLY	ROTATE HORIZON-TALLY	EXTERNAL CHASE VIEW
---------	-------------------	----------------------	---------------------

1	2	DECREASE SENSITIVITY	
		INCREASE SENSITIVITY	



5	6	7	COCKPIT VIEW
			REAR VIEW

9	8	7	RIGHT VIEW
			REAR VIEW



INSIDE LOCK	CONFIGURE MENU	DEL	COCKPIT LOCK
		-	+

INCREASE RPM

DECREASE RPM

NAVY STRIKE

This keyboard template has been created by PC Zone for purchasers of the game *Navy Strike*, published by Empire Interactive. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by Empire Interactive. All rights recognised.



S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	SPACEBAR
SOUND SETTINGS	HUD TOGGLE	FLAPS	GEAR	LANDING HOOK	CROSSHAIR LEFT	CROSSHAIR RIGHT	TARGET RELOCK	FIRE
C	V	B	N	M	CROSSHAIR BACKWARD	CROSSHAIR BACKDOORS	MINIMUM POWER	MAXIMUM POWER
IMPACT VIEW	CHECK EVENT	AIR BRAKE	BOMB BAY DOORS					
Z	X							ENTER COMBAT LOCK

INSIDE LOCK

OUTSIDE LOCK VIEW

EXTERNAL SATELITE

OUTSIDE LOCK VIEW

ROTATE VERTICALLY

ROTATE HORIZON-TALLY

EXTERNAL CHASE VIEW

ROTATE HORIZON-TALLY

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ROTATE VERTICALLY

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86%



90%

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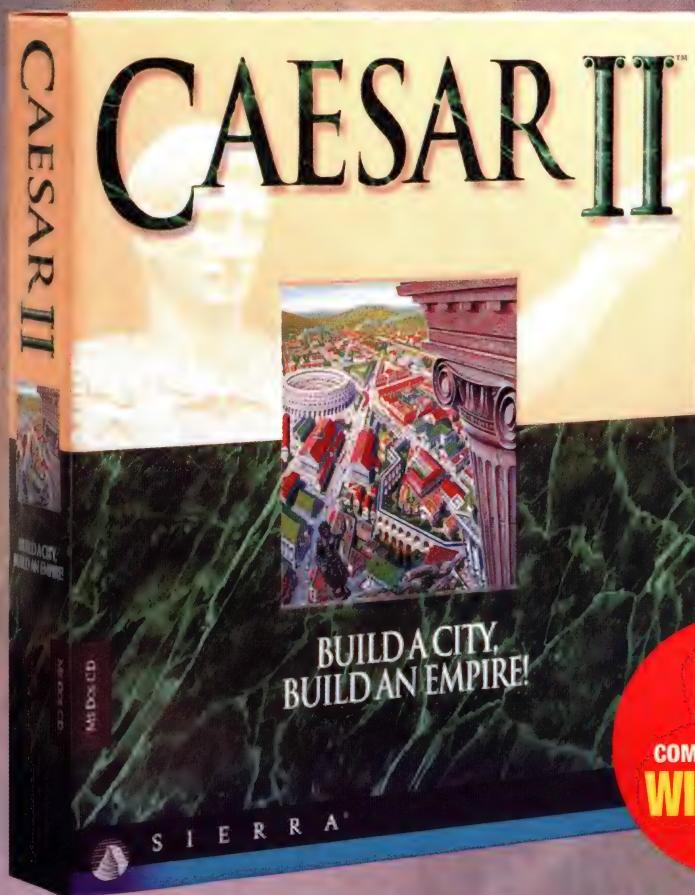
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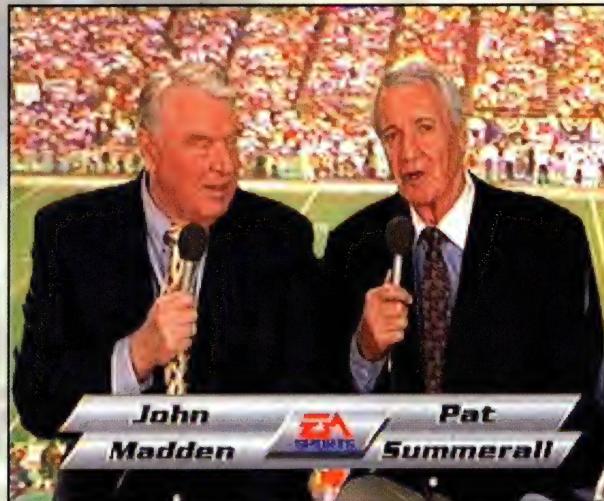
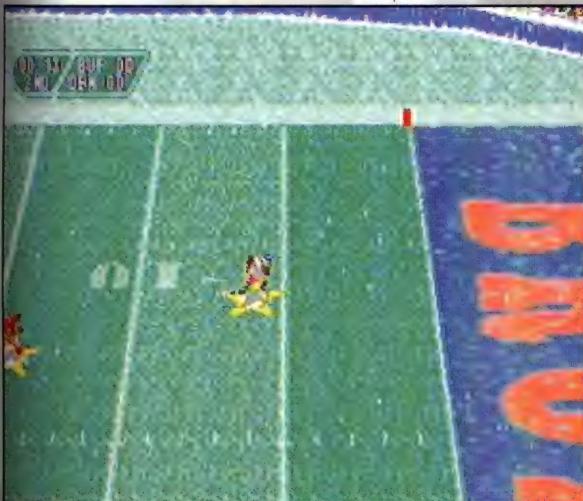
John Madden is big and fat and he knows loads about American football. **Patrick McCarthy** fulfills two out of three of the above criteria.

John Madden 96



DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST *JOHN* Madden Football, all those years ago on the pc? The teams only played in red or blue regardless of their colours in real life, and the players looked like ants dressed up in tiny jelly baby outfits. It was controlled entirely by the mouse, which meant that essentially, you called your play and then watched and waited to see what happened, waving the mouse

about as the situation demanded. And it had sound effects that seemed most likely to have been provided by way of sampling Sweep having an orgasm. But at the time it came out, the only competition on the pc was *NFL Challenge*, which was played out via two teams of animated X's and O's, so it seemed quite stunning. And you could edit plays to your heart's content, making them as peculiar and twisted as you liked.



Product details

Developer: EA Sports

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: November

Witter, witter, witter...

And that was it for some time as far as Madden went on the pc. Meanwhile, there was great excitement when the Mega Drive version was released - some journalists had embarrassing lumps in their pants while they reviewed it; normal people liked it too. Mega Drive and SNES versions were released every year. However, all that came out on the pc was another version of the same old mouse-operated game. People were by now crying out for a decent American football game on the pc, until finally *Front Page Sports Football* arrived, the nearest thing to Mega Drive Madden on the pc. But nothing from EA.

Wittering on...

It makes you wonder why, though, because *NHL Hockey* was released on the pc in an almost identical form to the console version from which it sprang; then *FIFA Soccer* made its appearance. Both played quite well, although they scrolled comparatively slowly, but still there was nothing to be heard on the

(Left) "You're looking very old, Pat. Near to death, in fact."
"I certainly am, John."

(Far left) Just for a laugh, Barry decided to run the wrong way.

3 Did you know? (pt 1)

Did you know that American football was very nearly invented by William Webb Ellis? The notorious cheating upper-class twit, not content with 'creating' rugby by handling the ball in a game of football, was on holiday in America when he was invited to turn out for a local football team. He strolled onto the pitch wearing a Roundhead's helmet, with his shoulders padded with two rocking chairs and his body heavily dosed with goat stimulants. Straight from the kick-off, he picked the ball up and hurled it downfield, expecting his colonial chums to adopt his methods on the spot and form another new sport, as his gullible public school chums had before them. Instead, the Americans dragged him to the side of the pitch and kicked him unconscious. American football was then invented five years later, by someone else.

(Far right) Thank God for that. For a nasty moment I thought it might be free of reams of stats.

! Did you know? (pt 2)

Did you know that the world's longest touchdown run was over a thousand miles long? Abner Bullwinkle set off on a run with the ball on his own five-yard line in the 1937 Harvard-Yale game, when a Catalina flying boat, taking off from the nearby airfield on a delivery run of novelty condoms to St Mary of the Weeping Carpetburn's College for Christian All-In Wrestlers' Daughters in Little Packet, Arkansas, caught the ball on its wingtip and Bullwinkle, unwilling to let go, was taken with it. Two days later, on the plane's return trip, he was dropped off at exactly the same place on the pitch and sprinted the length of the field to make the touchdown.

Madden front. Instead, a 'super-fab' version came out on the 3DO. Isn't it funny how, as soon as there's a leap in technology, the graphics are the first thing to get tweaked. On the 3DO the cute, cartoony but fast-moving and infinitely manoeuvrable Mega Drive players were swiftly transformed into lumbering monsters who, as soon as they got into a clinch together, were difficult to tell apart. Try a run up the middle and you often just had to hope for the best; you certainly couldn't see well enough to spot a gap in the line

(Right) No, I'm not the guy who was on trial for killing my wife.

(Far right) It was the Superbowl, his parents were in the crowd, and he'd just had a quick fling with the Homecoming Queen in the dressing room. The quarterback decided the time was right to wear his really big glitter boots.



Scouting Report

Receivers

		Spd	Agil	Hnds	Brk
#86	D. SCOTT	13	12	8	2
#81	C. PICKENS	12	13	10	2
#80	D. DUNN	11	10	5	3
#89	J. QUERY	10	9	9	3
#19	J. HILL	10	9	4	3
#16	D. RHODES	9	8	4	3
#82	T.O. MCGEE	8	8	5	6
#88	D. WARE	7	8	6	6
#87	T. SADOWSKI	7	7	5	2

and go for it. Likewise with catching the ball in a crowd: it was hard to see who was who, so you just ended up whacking the jump button and hoping for the best.

And now, finally, a version has made it to the PC. And it looks nearer, if anything, to the 3DO version of *FIFA* than to any version of *Madden* seen before. It's using EA's new Virtual Stadium technology, which enables you to view proceedings from any angle you like. With 3DO *FIFA*, of course, there were angles galore, but none of them were just right. This is one step on from that, and besides, 'just right' for American football is usually from behind the quarterback. Except when your opponent is about to make a catch, in which case it's from the back of the stand, looking towards the sun.

Intelligent players

One of the things that almost everyone complained about in *FIFA Soccer* was that the players were too intelligent. We suspect that they used the intelligence routines from *Madden* to control the players. (Which wasn't as good as having *Madden* itself to play on your PC,

but might be seen as the next best thing.) Anyone who played the console versions of *Madden* will know that, if you didn't want to intervene, you could just call the play and leave the players to their own devices: wide receivers and running backs would run their routes, offensive linemen would block, the quarterback would throw the pass or hand the ball off. Everyone on both sides would react according to their instructions and respond to the ball, too. Which is great – in American football. But in proper football, you don't expect that much intelligence (especially in English sport). You don't want players diving in to head rebounds before you tell them to, or sliding the ball into touch as soon as you switch control to someone else. But you do in American football, and EA probably has more experience of making them do this than anyone else.

So you can guarantee that *Madden 96* will have players who respond to the ball and to your input as and when you want them to, and who also stick to their tasks if you leave them alone. And it will look good, too. As for the rest, we'll have to wait and see. **z**





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INTERACTIVE

Terminator: Future Shock

IN PRODUCTION

Here comes another *Doom* clone from US Gold – and Chris Anderson thinks it could be the best one yet.

(Above) This is an intro cut, but you do get to fly in the game, honest.

IF YOU STOP TO THINK ABOUT EXACTLY what it is that makes *Doom* the most addictive first-person perspective shoot 'em up in the history of the galaxy, you'll probably find that the answer is rather simple – it's because the gameplay feels more violent and gory than any of the *Doom* copycats that have appeared over the last year.

Heretic is a good game, but for me it's just not as much fun throwing spells at people and waving your wand about compared to taking out mutant soldiers with a double-barrelled shotgun. *Rise Of The Triad* would have been all right if you didn't have to spend half your time pogoing around the place on bouncy platforms, and *Cyclones* could have been the absolute business if it didn't have an interface from Hell.

I haven't seen very much of *Terminator* yet, but I played around with it for a while at the ECTS and it really does look like it's going to be the best *Doom* clone around by a very long, long shot. This is partially down to the fact that as a *Terminator* movie tie-in, the way the

(Right) Surprisingly for a *Doom* type game, you get to shoot things.

(Far right) Great game, great graphics – who needs *Doom*? (Er, most of us actually – Ed.)

Product details

Developer: Bethesda

Publisher: US GOLD

Telephone: 0121-625 3388

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

and tells you to find John Connor, leader of the resistance movement.

The game starts with you driving to the resistance HQ and heroically joining the movement. You are given missions throughout to complete which involve driving, rescuing prisoners from death camps, flying an H/K fighter, or simply walking about shooting the hell out of everything in sight. The variety in the types of mission, plus the influence of an original science fiction storyline based on the movies is what gives *Terminator* the vital edge over the other *Doom* type games around. You also get to explore the inside of every building you come across on the landscape.

To be honest, it's a bit of an insult to compare *Terminator: Future Shock* to *Doom* clones such as *Rise Of The Triad*, *Cyclones*, and even *Heretic*. It has more features than the lot of them put together, the graphics are bloody gorgeous and I for one just can't wait to see it when it comes out in December. Hopefully we'll have a full review of the game in our next issue. Watch this space. **Z**



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BEAU
JOLLY

Yet another *Doom*-clone strides purposefully onto the PC. Jeremy Wells sticks his foot out to see if Origin's latest offering will pass the trip test.

(Right) Omigod! It's Michael Stipe. This little follicly-challenged chap is a ventriloquist – well, he doesn't open his mouth when he speaks to you.

Cybermage



(Above) Look familiar? While the levels are nice and detailed, there's little you can actually interact with, pick up, push, take, throw etc, etc, apart from the rather obvious doors, monitors, weapons, etc.

YOU'D THINK THAT A COMPANY AS big and super as Origin would have jumped on the first person perspective shoot 'em up (or *Doom*) bandwagon some time ago. In fact, it's surprising that Origin hasn't applied its not inconsiderable talent to good effect on at least 17 million lookalike products by now and gotten extremely fat on the proceeds (don't mention US Gold!).

System Shock, its earliest foray into the first person perspective world, resisted the temptation to be just another *Doom*-clone and was actually rather top. Best described as 'the thinking man's *Doom*', it offered a breath of fresh air to a shotgun weary nation who'd grown tired of wandering around in circles, shooting Tomato monsters. Hopes are therefore very high for *Cybermage*.

(Right) Enemy AI needs a bit of work, although the baddies are nicely animated. Once you've shot them, you can run over them and boost your energy – a nice touch.

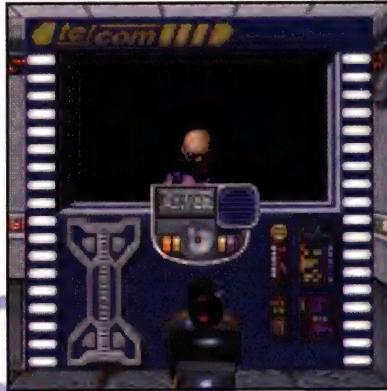
(Far right) The tank bits give the game a bit of variety, but it's still a case of 'When I grow up I want to be like *Doom*'. Let's hope Origin spices it up a bit before releasing it. A multi-character, multi-player option would be nice.

With *Cybermage* Origin has kept the 'thinking' bit and tried to introduce a little more oomph at the same time. Not only do you get to shoot things with various deadly devices, but you also have a number of destructive spells up your sleeve that you can cast at offending er... offenders.

"So it's like *Heretic*?" you proffer. Well, no not really. It's being pitched as an 'interactive comic book adventure' which probably means very little, except that Origin can get away with graphics that are best described as 'colourful' and a plot that could quite easily live in Wonderland, with characters to match. If you're expecting *System Shock 2* meets *Captain Marvel*, then you're in for a shock. LucasArts is currently working on a 'comic book style' shoot 'em up that uses the rather excellent *Dark Forces* engine; it's due out early next year, so if you want more variation on a theme, look in that direction.

Yawn potential

Cybermage is undoubtedly yet another variation on a theme in that it requires lots of running around shooting things and therefore has the potential to be extremely yawnny. However, it also requires you to collect things, interact with NPCs (non-player characters), drive around and shoot things in a tank and figure out how to escape to safety on the way. In this sense it's more like a first-person version of *Fade To Black*, but without the fancy graphics.



Product details

Developer: Origin

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

It is, however, already different enough from your average blast-fest to keep you interested. *Quake* it ain't, but first impressions are quite favourable. The control system (a mixture of mouse and keyboard) is a bit fiddly at first but soon becomes quite easy to use, the range of weapons and spells is impressive, and the fact that you can climb ladders, log onto systems, crouch, run, jump and look up and down means you'll probably spend more time foraging and exploring than merely firing at anything that does (and doesn't) move.

The strange purple fist thing that sticks out in front of you (well, I presume that's what it is) looks a bit odd, and the SVGA graphics make for a rich (albeit garish) player environment. Enemy AI is already quite competent, and there's some nice animations in there; I think what I'm trying to say is that it's got potential. That's not meant to be patronising, but at the mo' it all looks a little lacklustre and you just can't help thinking that Origin could do a lot better. Time for a team talk before the whistle blows for the start of the second half, methinks. **Z**



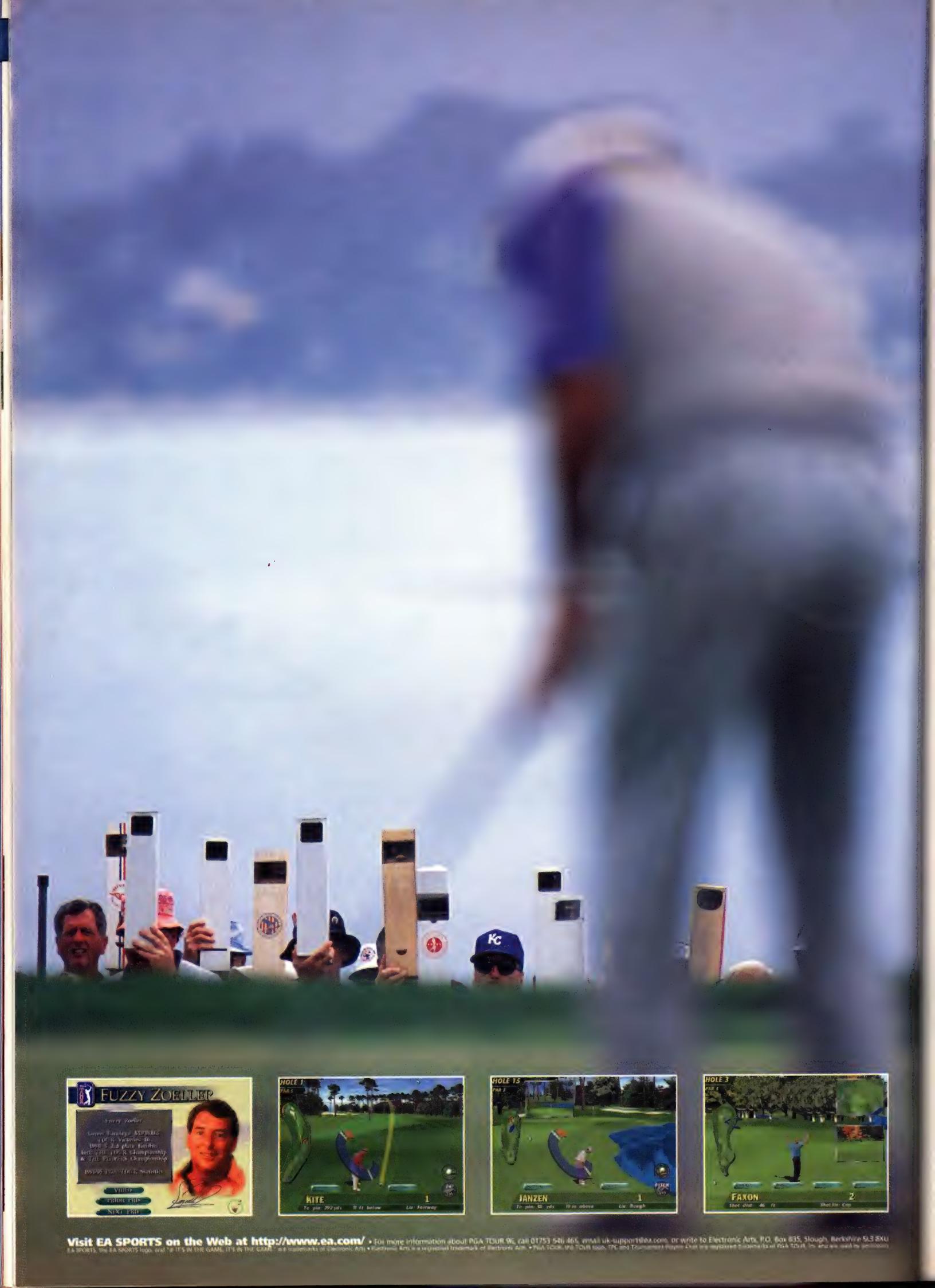
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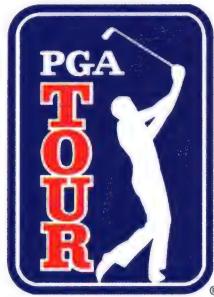
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it's in
the GAME,
it's in
the GAME™

Wipeout

As we mentioned last month, many of the initial PlayStation releases are set to be ported to the PC in the next couple of months. John Davison checks out one of the more impressive titles from this initial batch.

(Below) The futuristic feel of the game is aided by the moody lighting and superbly drawn backdrops.



RESEARCHING THE FEATURE FOR LAST month's cover was certainly a reassuring experience. Despite the fact that the whole world seems to have gone PlayStation and next generation console crazy, it looks like the PC isn't going to get left behind. If anything, it would appear that we are all going to benefit from the renewed 'mainstream' interest in video games.

By now just about everyone must surely have experienced the PlayStation launch hype; it's been out in the shops for more than a month and we've had it exposed to us in virtually every way possible, short of it dropping its pants and whooping out its tackle. The PlayStation is here to stay and it has some bloody good games already.

One of the first particularly bloody good ones is this little beauty from Sony Interactive (previously Psygnosis, in case you didn't know). If you've been watching all the multi-format games press recently, you'll probably have heard of *Wipeout* – it's one of those games that has got everyone talking because it looks so damn impressive.

So what's so hot?

As you can see from the screenshots, *Wipeout* is quite evidently a rather flash-looking 3D thing. Quelle surprise – it's a PlayStation conversion. But hey, unlike some of the others knocking around at the moment, like er, *Destruction Derby* (which we've covered extensively in this issue), this a futuristic 3D thing. At absolute base level it's a racing game but, like Bullfrog's *Hi-Octane*, it adds a little spice to the overall proceedings by introducing some 'fun' bits.

Firstly, like *Hi-Octane*, the 'cars' are extremely fast hover-ship things that float a few feet above the ground and can zip around at about mach 12 or something stupid. Yet while this is all incredibly hip and hi-tech, it does make life a bit unusual on the old controls front. There are four different racing 'ships' to choose from, and each one behaves very differently in the way that they accelerate or turn.

Weapon-tastic

On top of this though, you also have the ability to pick up a variety of single-shot weapons; these vary from dumb rockets which just fly forwards until they hit something, to cool heat-seeking missiles that streak after your nearest opponent. As I'm sure you're all well aware, racing games are fun – but racing games where you can shoot at everyone else are even better. Immersing yourself in such a game just seems to wrench the road-rage out of your system and ultimately proves incredibly satisfying.

But that's not all! There are a number of hazards which the six different tracks will throw at you, and these range from the usual racing game fare of bends and chicanes to the more elaborate *Fatal Racing*-style jumps and stunts that crop up from time to time. The jumps are especially well executed, as they actually manage to convey the feeling of the ground just falling out from underneath you.

Okay, so it's not the most original concept that we've ever come across, and it does bear more than a teensy weensy bit of a similarity to *Hi-Octane*,



but the whole product is carried off with such style and panache that it's easy enough to forgive.

As you'd expect, the presentation of the visuals is absolutely second to none. The texture-mapped polygons are some of the fastest we've seen outside *Screamer*, and the fluidity and speed at which they move is absolutely splendid. The tracks themselves are all suitably hi-tech and 'space-age', while the track side scenery is both beautifully texture-mapped and animated – something that we tend not to see that often.

It's clear that the PC version has benefited from *Wipeout*'s heritage though. Any of you that have seen the PlayStation original can't possibly deny that it's gobsmacking and it's clear that the PC team at Sony Interactive has pushed the PC as hard as possible to match the original. The only real noticeable differences are that the PC game runs in 256-colour VGA while the PlayStation version runs in some weird 'billions of colours' graphics mode. But as we mentioned in our feature last month, there is now a symbiosis between the PC and the Sony platforms that means both systems will push each other in terms of both gameplay and presentation quality.

Aside from this cosmetic detail though, the PC version is in some ways an enhancement of the original. Because of the networking and multi-player facilities that the PC has at its disposal, we can expect to see a multi-player option within the game that will allow at least four players to compete; however, this has yet to be confirmed as we go to press, as there may be support for more players (*Destruction Derby* has provision for 16 players, so who knows?).

Impressed? You will be

Finally, one of the elements that ought to get some of you excited is the music you'll hear when you play *Wipeout*. Whereas most software houses employ an in-house musician to crank out a variety of suitably atmospheric tunes, Sony has gone one better and employed the undisputed talents of *Leftfield* and *The Chemical Brothers*, who have both provided remixes of some of their tracks. And on top of that, *Orbital* have composed a new tune for the game. Cool or what? The throbbing nature of this music is absolutely spot-on for this style of game and is testament to the fact that games are now being taken far more seriously by other elements of the entertainment industry. **Z**

(Top right) The texture-mapped polygons are absolutely spot-on and are by far some of the most impressive we've seen so far. Only *Screamer* can really match the amount of detail found in the backgrounds here.

(Right) The way the cars float and bob above the tracks coupled with the frenetic nature of the graphics helps to convey an incredible sense of uncontrolled speed. Wa-hay!

(Below) Psygnosis has managed to match the PlayStation original amazingly. The only noticeable difference is that on the PC this runs in 256-colour VGA.



Product details

Developer: Psygnosis

Publisher: Sony Interactive

Telephone: 0151-282 3000

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

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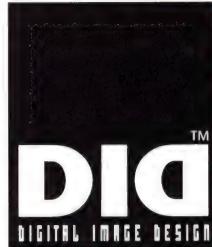
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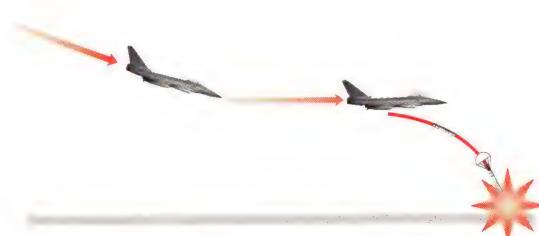


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Looking back

COMMAND & CONQUER

(Virgin Interactive)

Reviewed issue 28

It's still totally and utterly bloody wonderful. Buy it. If you can't manage that, beg, borrow or steal – just make sure you get your hands on a copy. I know we mentioned it last month as well but it is totally, totally brilliant.

FADE TO BLACK

(Electronic Arts)

Reviewed issue 31

The follow-up to *Flashback* is without a doubt one of the finest arcade adventure-style things that we've seen in a very long time. It set a precedent with its revolutionary 3D engine and with prolonged play it could quite easily be described as one of the surprise hits of the year. The learning curve is exactly right, the graphics are simply gorgeous and there is enough variety to keep you keen throughout the whole game. Check it out, it's smart – we gave it a classic award a couple of months ago and it's more than worth it.

MAGIC CARPET 2

(Electronic Arts)

Reviewed issue 32

It's a fantastic game, and almost certainly much better than the original, but it does have one major downfall: if you're any good, you'll finish it fairly quickly. Macca managed to complete the game soon after he'd finished reviewing it and complained that towards the end you could get through many of the levels without being given too much of a kicking by the bad guys.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

(Electronic Arts)

Reviewed issue 31

As more and more of these new-fangled polygon racing games appear, we're finding that although they all look absolutely gorgeous, the gameplay isn't exactly that super. As we look back we're finding that as far as longterm appeal is concerned, *The Need For Speed* is possibly the best of the bunch. It's got real cars, a good control system and lots of little extra bonus bits that keep you interested. A truly good game that improves with age.



THANKS THIS MONTH

Andrea Griffiths
(Electronic Arts)
Paul Button
(GT Interactive)
Glenn O'Connell
(Sony Interactive)

Cool Games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Destruction Derby

Hexen

Championship Manager 2

Worms

Screamer

Crap Games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Cyberbykes

AI Unser Jr Racing

Fury 3

Sim Isle

Phantasmagoria

Reviews Section



THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ CLASSIC

Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc., etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes oozing playability.

80-89 RECOMMENDED

Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70-79

A good idea that's been reasonably well implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying "do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

60-69

Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre

gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50-59

Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40-49

A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20-39

Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below PANTS

Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the PC Zone big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.

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(Below) Fancy a bit of carnage and the chance to make your opponents chew tarmac? *Destruction Derby* it is then.



PC
ZONE
CLASSIC

Destruction

"What's this then, an Arthur Cox simulator?" asked Patrick McCarthy. What he meant is anyone's guess, but you can guarantee it wasn't funny.

I'M THINKING OF STARTING A NEW pressure group. I don't know what to call it yet. All that matters is that it will have one of those annoying acronyms that's only been chosen for the sake of the acronym, and that really doesn't make any sense when you spell out what it's supposed to stand for.

The purpose of this new group will be to encourage companies to produce games for people who get bored with a game as soon as they have to put any effort in. For people who, as soon as they've finished their initial allocation of money in *Sim City 2000*, destroy it and start another city. For those who never bother learning all the special moves in a beat 'em up, and just take the easiest fighter to win with and pick on the token quadriplegic. And for those who avoid flight sims completely unless they can get the computer to do all the tricky bits. Let's face it, if a game gets too serious and you have to work too hard at it, it stops being a game and becomes work. Which is what work's for – games are supposed to be a diversion from the usual daily grind.

Take, for example, the serious car racing simulator: pesky gear ratios to adjust according to the characteristics of the track, fuel loads to balance, tyre pressures and downforce thingamabobs to fiddle with, multi-million pound cars to coddle and tweak to perfection. Sod that. Hands up who spent most of their time in the original *Indianapolis 500* going the wrong way round the track,



(Above) The texture-mapped polygons really are exceptionally cool and rival anything else on the PC.

(Right) It's a bit of a shame your car has a painting of a git on the doors, isn't it?



Derby

trying to take out as many different cars as possible in one go. And saving the most carnage-packed examples to disk to show their chums. Hands up who, after doing that for a while, only ever raced 10-lap races and never ever bothered racing a full race around that sodding oval track. Good, I think we have something approaching a target audience, here.

Car design for beginners

Destruction Derby only exists to satisfy the entirely natural urge to destroy large, powerful lumps of machinery;

to create devastation where once there was a brightly coloured, fully-functioning automobile. And to smash the shit out of your fellow racers. All right, so they've given you four ways to play the thing, but be fair, if they didn't, there'd be complaints that it's all too samey. As if anyone cares

anyway about the other bits. I suppose we ought to tell you what they are, just in case some greasy-haired,

pullovered, moustachioed BT engineer in undercoat-coloured pastie shoes and a bri-nylon shirt writes in to complain: there's a straight race, where people who insist on doing these things chug



(Far left) The courses vary from mundane and boring ovals to twisty, turny, seaside tracks. Luverly.

(Left) Transparent smoke, shards of broken car, flash texture maps. The programmer is quite clearly a show-off.

The Destruction Derby Highway Code

General principles

The ideal driving position is comfortable, but intense. The steering wheel should be gripped so tightly that your knuckles look like ping-pong balls; head should be held low, sunk between the shoulder blades; breathing should be rapid, noisy and ideally through the mouth, punctuated by occasional wet gasps and guttural grunts. All movements should be violent, quick and jerky. Always try to make your every manoeuvre as unpredictable as possible to other road users. Remember at all times the maxim MSM – Mirror, Swerve, Mutilate.



Reversing

Before reversing, make sure that there are obstructions behind you – children or animals would be the ultimate choice here for satiating any blood lust urges you may have, but unfortunately you're unlikely to find them in this game. Reverse with little or no care, especially if your car has a large 'blind spot'. Why not try reversing everywhere at first – admittedly it may take a little getting used to, but incurs less damage to your steering in head-on collisions, giving you greater control later in the race, and increasing your chances of massacring other road users with precision. On the other hand, it could ruin your ability to drive at all if you snap the rear axle. What the hell.

Lane discipline

Veer madly from side to side at all times, except when overtaking (see below).



Road junctions

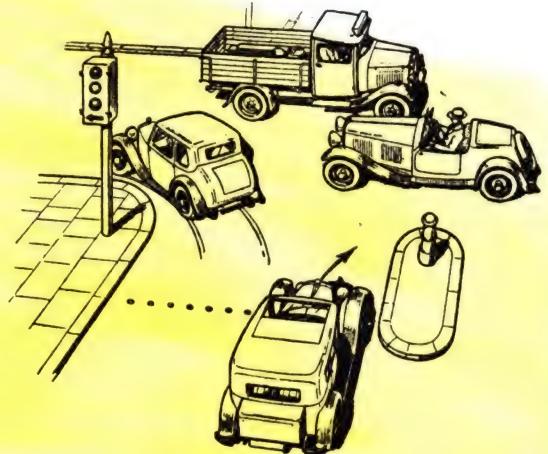
Great care must be taken at road junctions because of the possibility of other traffic in the vicinity. Junctions are particularly dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. But, like the children and animals mentioned previously, unfortunately there aren't any in this.

Check your mirrors on approach. Check your position (you should be in the middle of the road) and speed. Correct speed on approach is essential. Be prepared to accelerate at a moment's notice.

Check the road ahead for other traffic. Look at all traffic signs and road markings (if any), and ignore them – they're only there to distract you. If other traffic is approaching, prepare to give way to no one. Pick someone you dislike the look of and veer wildly towards their car. Put

your foot to the floor, if it isn't already. (In fact, if it isn't there already, you may be marked down on your test.) Aim for the rear wing for maximum effect on impact, but if your enthusiasm gets the better of you and you inadvertently jump your car through the windscreens into the other driver's face, not to worry. It happens. Of course your examiner will make allowances for your nerves.

When all the smashing, crashing and banging has finally stopped, carefully extricate yourself from the mess, look around you using any mirrors still available, and move violently away.



Overtaking

Overtaking is a manoeuvre that should be performed with great care. Ensure that, if overtaking on a bend, you always do so on the inside. There will be more opportunity to nudge the opponent into the walls, spin them around, and generally run them over.

If someone moves alongside you in an attempt to overtake, do not accelerate. Instead, allow their rear wing to come alongside you, then lurch to their side of the road, spinning their car until it is sideways-on to the direction of travel, whereupon it will hopefully either crash or roll over in a huge ball of flames, making the driver's eyes pop like little white balloons in the heat. (How poetic – Ed.)



In the event of an accident

Make sure you

- drive away
- reverse back into or over your victim
- drive away again
- hit someone else as soon as possible afterwards



! Lights, camera, carnage...

The game comes with a comprehensive replay facility that allows you to watch an entire race all the way through. There are fixed cameras that cover the action automatically, changing as necessary to frame your car at all times, or you can set up as many of your own floating cameras as you like, putting them where you see fit. It's a bit of a weird system, though – each camera you set up only operates for one second, so if you set up five cameras, the first five seconds of action will be shown by each camera in turn, with the rest of the race, however long it takes, being shown from the final camera you selected. (Eh? I'm afraid you've lost me there – Ed.) I know.



about trying to win as if they've never heard of F1GP or IndyCar Racing and this is the only outlet for their compulsive need to be a pretend racing driver. There are practice facilities for this, or they race in Championships, getting promoted from league to league, racing on harder and harder tracks until it gets so tricky that their revolting moustaches are slimey with sweat.

There's a time trial, where the same people can race on their own, to improve the speed with which they can race on their own. There's a halfway-

start in a large circular arena, parked around the edge, facing towards the centre. They drive towards each other at top speed. Much crashing and scraping of metal ensues as the competitors desperately try to accumulate points. "But just how does one accumulate points?" I hear you cry.

Driving without due care and attention

You get ten points for rotating a car 360 degrees in a collision, and another ten if you completely wreck an opponent's

"Destruction Derby only exists to satisfy the entirely natural urge to destroy lumps of machinery, create devastation and smash the shit out of fellow racers."

house sort of arrangement, where people who like the air of respectability a race imparts can still pretend to be racing, at the same time getting in a few sneaky nudges with other people's cars while they're not looking. And again, they can practice so that they're good enough when they first start a Championship and won't feel silly.

And there's the proper thing, the thing that gives the game its name, the Destruction Derby itself. Sixteen cars

car, four points for a 180 degree spin and two for a measly 90 degree spin. But nothing, apparently, for a 270 degree spin. This, like life itself, seems harsh.

There are three cars to choose from, graded according to how fast they are, how difficult they are to control and how much abuse you'll get from your opponents when you write one off. One of the best features of the game is that your car registers damage logically, crumples up authentically and handles

accordingly. Too many head-on, flat-out meetings with the walls or other cars, for example, and not only will your bonnet start to look like a prototype slinky, but also your steering will be jiggled. You'll find that your car's steering constantly veering to the right, or stuck totally to the left, or – oh-oh – maybe just completely inoperable. Too many rams from the rear and you'll not only get piles the size of basketballs, but your drive axle may well snap, turning you into a helpless and inviting target for other road users. And so on.

The other computer characters in the game are all supposed to have their own 'personalities' and their own ways of driving, although in the heat of the action with everyone smashing into everyone else, I can't say I could tell who was who. Come to that, who cares?

Joined-up fun

Where the game comes into its own is with its network options, of which it has plenty. The Duel, for example, allows you to face off in a Destruction Derby against another human driver (I'm assuming you're human yourself, ▶



(Far left) The Grim Reaper is the 'medium' car and has the coolest paint-job by far.

(Left) One of the problems with a lot of the tracks is that they're a bit narrow.

(Below left) Aha, cunning... I know, I'll just flip round and stop everyone by sticking the car side-on in the track.

! 57 varieties (well, five...)

Wreckin' Racing

Or, if you like, the best of both worlds. (Where did this phrase come from? Exactly what other world is it referring to? Sorry, I digress...) Drive around a number of circuits, for a set number of laps, in a race sort of way. But get bonus points for spinning other cars, smashing them into each other and breaking them. Get ten measly points for winning the race, but get ten points for just one 360 degree spin inflicted on another car, or one other car smashed beyond repair. A quandary: go for the win, or slam the car into reverse, ignore the race entirely, and concentrate on smashing your fellow competitors to smithereens (which is a small town in the Netherlands, in case you didn't already know). Perhaps it isn't such a a quandary after all.

Stock Car Racing

This is more like proper racing, with everyone going flat out to win, rather than attempting to boost the car repair industry. Of course, there are always one or two lunatics in the minority who try to spoil it for everyone else. And if you have any sense, you'll be one of them. As a straight race, it doesn't really work that well, and it's largely because of the tracks. The tracks tend towards the narrow, the straights tend towards the short and the corners tend towards the 90 degree type, and it's difficult to get anything like what Murray Walker would call "the raciiingggg liyyne". Especially with 412 other cars trying to go through the same small gap at the same time. So you just hammer everyone else about as normal, really, except that this time you're not getting any points for it.

Time Trials

Pick a track, any track. Drive around it as fast as you can (bearing in mind the point about the circuits' tendencies towards right-angled turns and short straights) and look at your completion time at the bottom of the screen when you finish. Now start shouting about how good it is. Be sensible and save it to the hard drive. Phone up all your chums. Tell them about how good your time is. Hear them laugh. Hang up.

Destruction Derby

This, as Brian Sewell might say, is the game reduced to its very essence. Stripped of frills, its non-essential elements pared away, it has an almost Bauhaus-like purity of thought and deed. Destruction Derby is this package's *raison d'être*. In other words, there's none of this pissing about with circuits, and no pretensions towards being a race. All the cars start in a big circle, pointing inwards. Which in itself is perhaps symbolic of the modern American psyche. And everyone hurtles towards each other and smashes each other to shit, getting points for doing so. And the losers have to go and live naked in a ghetto and the winners wear braces and do Europe.

Total Destruction

Down in the murky, oxygen-free depths of the game's options, below Destruction Derby and Other Options, you'll find Total Destruction. In a game based entirely upon violent misconduct, this particular game is the Full-Bottle-of-Newcastle-Brown-to-the-back-of-the-Teething-Infant-Christ-Child's-Head. (Hmmm... – very confused Ed.) There's no room for sentiment here. As soon as you start your car, every other car will target you, coming for you at maximum speed. The sole point is for you to last as long as you can before your car's written off. It won't be very long.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX (Pentium recommended)

Hard Disk Space: 15Mb

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick (analog & digital)

them. And the sound effects are very good. Glass shatters as you plough into someone and shatter their windscreen. Metal scrapes on metal and metal scrapes on concrete and your teeth try to leap from your gums and seek some kind of sanctuary elsewhere. All it really needs is one of those body jackets that whack you right in the chest when you collide with anything in the game. Think how proud you'd be, parading your broken ribs around to the admiration of your friends. There's not really much else to say. It's good. It crashes spectacularly well, it looks good, sounds good and it's a laugh. Perhaps the only disappointment is that the cars always stay on the ground, rather than somersaulting through the air like in Electronic Art's *The Need For Speed*, which cuts down on the chances of actually killing someone. Oh well. Z

(here) on an otherwise empty track, and settle any differences you might have. Tag is a version of Total Destruction in which every computer car goes for you until you tag your fellow player, at which point they all go for him. Seek and Destroy is another variation on the theme, this time with seven other cars going for each of you until you hit them, at which point they join your side and pile into other people. But they seem to be getting a tad desperate to include plenty of options here, and I'm sure most people will just stick to the straightforward Destruction Derby. Especially as up to 16 people will be able to do this at once over a network.

C-r-u-n-c-h

The graphics are excellent, as you can see, and it's one of the few games where the cars look just as good when you're close-up (as in bumper-to-windscreen) to



Score

90

Something for people who
don't like playing racing
games properly.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** November

Publisher: Sony Interactive

Tel: 0151-282 3000

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Witchaven

PC
ZONE

RECOMMENDED

Paul Presley admits he's useless at *Doom*, but we decided to give him a gore-fest to review anyway. Looking a few shades paler and suitably green he managed to stop shuddering and tell us what he thought...

(Far right) It's sick, sick, I tells ya! And probably some blood too.

(Below) Max Bygraves' hands finally get the treatment they deserve.



SPEAKING AS THE WORLD'S WORST *Doom* player (it's true, I've got a certificate and everything to prove it), I'm probably less than ideal to tackle a game like *Witchaven* with all its *Doom*-style play. Maybe the theory is that if I'm any good at it, the game must be rubbish? Not an entirely implausible hypothesis, I must say. However, there is an old Presley family saying that I've always adhered to and it's never been more pertinent than at this particular moment: There's a world o'difference betwixt being Bobby Davro and appreciating Bobby Davro. Ye ken?

Combat? You got it

Okay, so I'm crap at *Doom*-style games, but at least I can still tell when one is an absolute corker – and *Witchaven* definitely falls into that particular slot. It's a sort of midway point between *Heretic* and the *Ultima Underworld* series, which has you bravely battling goblins, trolls, skeletons and other *Dungeons & Dragons* rejects, all in the name of a dodgy plot and an impressive, albeit overlong, introductory animation.

People didn't seem take to *Heretic* the way they did to *Doom* and I think I know why – weapons. *Heretic* had lots of fantasy-based guns; *Witchaven* has swords, axes, daggers and so on. Hand-to-hand combat. In your face combat. Taste the blood combat. Remember how much fun the chainsaw is in *Doom*? Well, there's no need to imagine a game entirely like that – it's *Witchaven*. The action is fast and ferocious as well as intimate, which is where it scores over *Heretic*. That and the blood content.

Any parents reading? If so, here is a warning: On no account let your kids near *Witchaven* – it'll scar 'em for life and they'll probably grow up to be Tory MPs.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX

Hard Disk Space: 40Mb

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick

cosmetic point scoring, the higher your level, the better you'll be in the game. Bigger spells will then be available to you, your weapons will be faster and do more damage, and so on. It's a nice touch and provides a real incentive to keep going through the levels. Then add to that all the usual network/modem options, triggers and traps, top it up with impressive graphical effects and you've got yer actual total package.

Is it better than *Heretic*? You betcha. Is it better than *Hexen*? Hmm, similar perhaps. Is it better than *Quake*? Not if what little I've seen of *Quake* is to be believed. *Witchaven* has many, many fine elements and is really going to appeal to the gore munchers among you, but it doesn't have the same feeling of oomph that has gone before. A worthy addition but not quite the champion. Z

Score

88

Sick, twisted and violent – wayhey, what more could you possibly want?

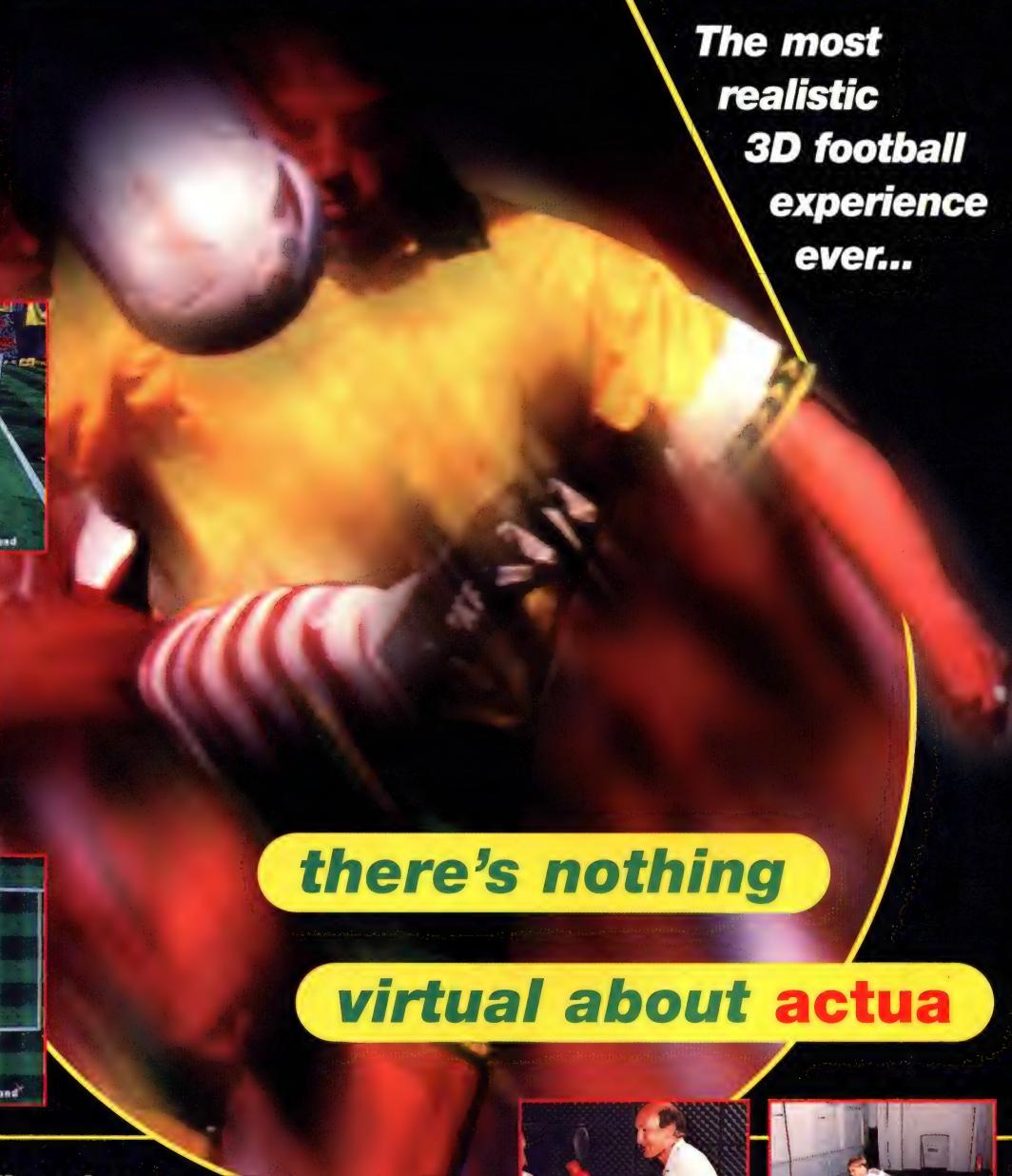
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: US Gold **Tel:** 0121-606 1800

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Duncan MacDonald once performed an accidental handbrake turn during a driving test. We thought such exploits made him the ideal person to review *Screamer* (etc, etc).



Screamer

HERE'S THE FIRST THING I'VE GOT TO say about this game: who in hell came up with the name? I don't know about you, but round my way 'screamer' isn't a particularly polite way to describe someone, as in: "Look at that bloke, he's a bit of a screamer." Is it politically incorrect for me to mention this? Oh well, if that's the case shoot me. I'm just reporting facts.

The second thing I've got to say about the game, in a crap Jon Pertwee Wurzel Gummidge type voice, is: "Blimey guv, them's some smashin' graphics and no mistake." Yup, glance at the screenshots and you'll see that *Screamer* looks pretty much like an arcade game - therefore it won't come as a shock when I tell you that the only real difference between *Screamer* and, say, *Ridge Racer*, is that you don't have to keep fishing pound coins out of your pocket. (Well, apart from the thirty you need to hand over to the shop assistant when you initially buy the bugger, of course.)

Screamer has six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto), and three different skill levels - yes, like a

coin-op. And just like a coin-op, there are also 'checkpoints'. But more of these later. For now let's get back to the tracks and the cars.

Courses for horses

Screamer's tracks are a treat to look at, and I'm not just talking about the tarmac and the buildings. I'm talking about all the little 'details' - all those

bastard, I hope you die!" every time you pass beneath it.) And the subway train, doing its small overland stint in the built-up city scenario? Yo-ho! *Screamer* doesn't pull any punches there, either - it sounds as good as it looks. You'll get the urge to hit the brakes, pull over, and just watch it choo-chooing along, on its way to wherever it's going (which is nowhere, but who cares?). There are

"Where *Screamer* does score well is in its instant gratification, its good looks, the fact that it moves like the clappers and that it only costs thirty quid."

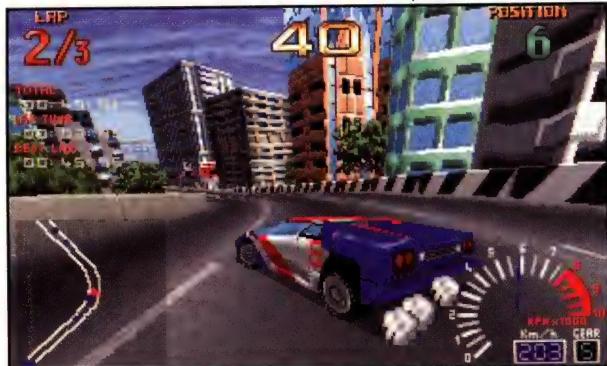
things that *Ridge Racer* and its coin-op ilk enjoy. Like the aeroplane taking off, for instance - *Screamer*'s got one. And the helicopter - *Screamer*'s got one of those too; it almost lands on the roof of your car once a lap for god's sake. (You can always pretend it's being piloted by Noel Edmunds and shout, "You smug

bridges over the road, too, full of traffic. (The same traffic every lap, incidentally, but who's counting?) And there's heaps of other stuff as well.

But 'neat touches' do not a game make, they just add. So what are they actually adding to? And the answer is, frankly, quite a lot. Which sort of brings

(Right) The leaning tower of Pisa's got nothing on this city.

(Far right) And catch those trees... it's like Thunderbird Two's about to take off.





us to the handling of the cars... bear with me.

Okay, so *Screamer* doesn't offer you anything like the dynamic realism you'll encounter in EA's *The Need For Speed*, but you *can* take corners sideways, which is what we're all after (isn't it?). You have to be careful though, because occasionally the back of your car will pop off in the opposite direction to the one you'd intended – and through no fault of your own, I might add. Or so it seemed to me. Or maybe I'm just a crap driver, in which case I await a slapping and am prepared to eat humble pie.

Whatever the case, the fact remains that the cars handle in such a way that you can tease extra seconds from a lap time in more ways than just sticking to what looks like the most ergonomic racing line. And this, funnily enough, brings us back to the tracks again. There are three excellent ones, two fairly enjoyable ones, and a boring one. But even *Screamer*'s boring one is better than an *IndyCar* oval.

I haven't got a Pentium...

Sod off then. Mind you, having said that, neither have I, or not at home anyway – I reviewed *Screamer* on PC Zone's p75. But let me add this: it zips along like a ferret with an electrode jammed up its chaff. When the speedo says 180mph, you tend to believe it. Or, to put it another way, the 'game engine' is obviously rather good. One of *Screamer*'s main rivals would have to be *Fatal Racing* (which I reviewed on the office p75 as well), and, in terms of speed, *Screamer* not only shits on *Fatal Racing* from a great height, but looks much better while doing so. All the same, it's still time to upgrade. (And yes, I know you know. How about we get together and go out on a ram-raiding spree? I'll drive, you load the boot.)



(Left) You see that reflection on the back window? That moves, that does. You can get transfixed by it if you're not careful, and crash.

So where were we?

Let's have a quick recap: *Screamer* has an 'unfortunate' title; the cars don't handle particularly realistically, but do give a nod in the right direction; the tracks look great, and for the most part offer an interesting challenge. And it's all very arcadey. Very, very arcadey.

Er, hang on a minute, this isn't an arcade game magazine, is it?

It's PC Zone.

Which means you'll be playing *Screamer* at home. You'll be spending more than just 20 minutes a week on the thing. Meaning you'll soon start to become critical of the computer controlled drivers – are they any good?

What's their AI like? The sort of stuff, which, let's face it, is pretty important if you're in for the long haul.

So let me break the news to you gently. First off, forget the easy mode – even my nan could beat it. Medium is easy, and hard is hard for a while, but not for as long as it should be.

The computer-controlled drivers don't differ in speed to any great degree, and tend to drive around in a pack (they're pretty much glued together even after 25 laps, which is maximum distance).

But the weirdest thing is that your own car appears to have some kind of uncannily powerful magnet on the back of it... as soon as you take the lead, all the computer cars seem to be continuously



(Far left) A gratuitous powerslide. Totally unnecessary at this point on the course, but what the hell, eh?

(Left) Hey, Bridge Racer! (What an appallingly unfunny joke – Ed.)



right up your arse. It seems bloody impossible to pull out a substantial lead. Or at least that's how it appeared to me, anyway, and for my own peace of mind I did check it out on the replay.

Checkpoint Charlie

At the beginning of the review I mentioned that, just like arcade racing games, *Screamer* has 'checkpoints'. Fail to reach a particular point on a track within the given time limit and it's a case of Game Over Man! But why? This

is so bloody stupid that words fail me.

Arcade games have checkpoints for pretty obvious reasons: they want you to put another quid in the slot. Fair enough, we know the score.

The checkpoints in *Screamer*, however, stop you doing the things you

most want to do when you're getting bored of a track. Taking it backwards for example. Or stopping and looking at the subway train. Or just generally mucking about, going for some squirlies or whatever. I could go in-depth here and do an anti-checkpoint 'think piece', but I can't really be bothered. Checkpoints stink. That's all there is to say.

Extra, extra, extra...

Screamer has three sub-game options, which can be played on any of the six different tracks:

Sub-game one is 'knock over the bollards'. It's you versus the clock but hit a bollard and you gain an extra seconds' play - and it's bloody hard.

Sub-game two is similar to the first one. It's slalom time, with extra seconds for negotiating the 'gates'.

Sub-game three is the kiddie, though. It's excellento, and you may well remember it from *Hard Driving*. You complete a lap against the clock, the computer remembers your route, and you then race against a 'ghost car' of yourself. The computer continues to



(Above and right) Apart from being rather top, *Screamer* also allows you to play one of your own audio CDs while you're racing around the track. You can even assign a certain audio track to each racing track so you always get the same track when you race a certain track. Confused? It's really rather simple, and rather clever. Other companies take note.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: Ninja

Hard Disk Space: 40Mb

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, joypad

remember your fastest laps. It naturally presents a damn good challenge, and if you carry on racing against yourself in this mode, you can eventually become 'infinitely good'.

At the end of the day

All in all, *Screamer* is pretty smart - it certainly looks and sounds the business, anyway. But there are heaps of car games about at the moment, so how does *Screamer* fare by comparison? Its main rivals (both already mentioned) are going to be *The Need For Speed* and *Fatal Racing*, and to be quite honest there's not a lot separating the trio.

Where *Screamer* does score well is in its instant gratification, its good looks, the fact that it moves like the clappers, and that it only costs 30 quid. The only thing I'm dubious about though is the longevity of the game. And those bloody awful checkpoints... Jeez. Still, they can't be that bad as the game seems to have got everyone in the office hooked.

If you've got the sponds, then buy not only *Screamer* but the other two as well. If you're a tad skint then maybe flip a coin (but use a double header, and rig it so *The Need For Speed* wins). **Z**

Score

89

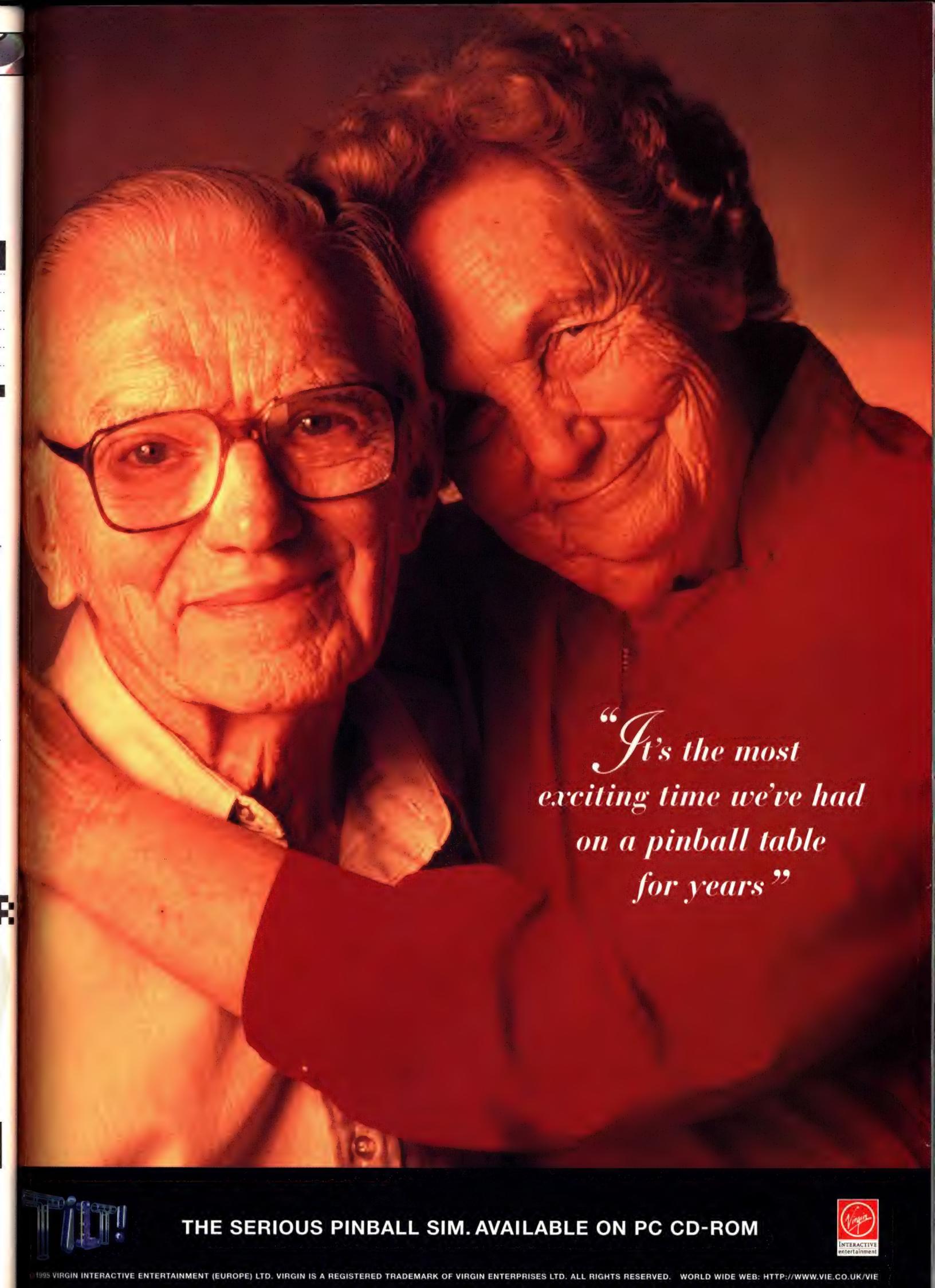
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Crusader

Blood and guts, action and adventure have had a strange effect on Charlie Brooker. Usually a normal peace-loving guy, he seems to have developed a lust for brutality and some kind of split personality disorder...

(Above) You're a lone crusader who's swapped sides with plenty to prove. You also wear a very tight red all-in-one that makes you look like Anneka Rice.

CRUSADER', HUH? SOUNDS LIKE some kind of medieval thang now, don't it? Kind of sets you thinkin' about a bunch of sword-slinging-white-ass-bygone-days dudes, workin' their way through Europe, slayin' people and shit. Well, you be thinkin' wrong. This here Crusader ain't no chain-mailin' helmet-wearin' heyno nonny no motherfunker, this here is some high-tech futuristic lethal weapon kind of guy. And believe me, this is one funky sonofabitch too, man, 'cos he ain't no yellow-bellied camouflage-sportin' dumb ass either. This baby strolls straight into a full-on combat situation dressed head to toe in *bright red armour*, man. You hear what I'm saying? Like, he ain't afraid to be seen. Now that's confidence, bro, that's *confidence*.

Okay, you seen what we lookin' at here? We're lookin' at the latest game from Origin, man. *Origin*. They ain't

dickin' around when it comes to no game, either my man. They brought us *Underworld*, man, they gave us *System Shock*, *Wing Commander 3*, the *Ultima* series... Jesus, these guys have classic PC games practically fallin' out of their ass, boy. You know, it's like, they go take a dump, man, and then they turn round to wipe an' shit and it's like, woah! There's a library of 100% prime-cut solid gold titles right there in the goddamn toilet pan! And you know what? It's looks like they gone done it again this time. We're talkin' SVGA, perfect animation, bad ass violence, and superlative gameplay. Smokin'.

Back to normal

Sod it. I can't keep that up – let's get to the point, shall we? We're supposed to be discussing *Crusader*. *Crusader* is fantastic. Put simply, it's like a cross between *Little Big Adventure* and *X:Com Terror From The Deep*. It's got the action adventure steak of the former, the strategic gunplay kidney of the latter, and the isometric perspective pastry of the two. It's a veritable multi-genre pie. And yes, it smells good. In fact, it's obvious from the word go that this is something major.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486

Hard Disk Space: 30Mb

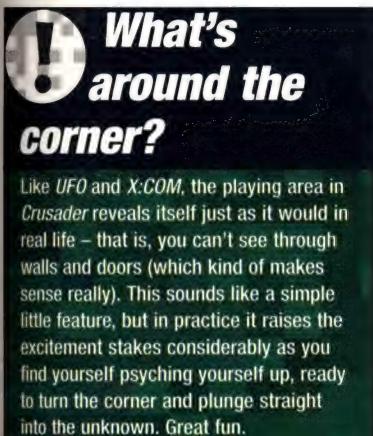
Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major cards

Controls: Keyboard and mouse

You (yes, you) are a kind of hi-tech space mercenary bloke; a potent mix of cat-burglar, espionage agent, and amoral gun-wielding thug. Since I'm sure you couldn't give a fiddler's pluck about the plot, I'm not going to even mention it (which is bloody handy considering I don't know anything about it). Plot, schmot, that's what I say – this game would be top-notch fun even if it revolved around rescuing the members of *The Partridge Family* one by one. *Crusader* leaves you in charge of the aforementioned military bloke and allows, nay, encourages you to set about being sneaky, cunning and violent, all at the same time. Basically, you break into places, search about for clues, blow stuff up, and kill loads of people with a variety of weapons. Fantastic.





Like *UFO* and *X-COM*, the playing area in *Crusader* reveals itself just as it would in real life – that is, you can't see through walls and doors (which kind of makes sense really). This sounds like a simple little feature, but in practice it raises the excitement stakes considerably as you find yourself psyching yourself up, ready to turn the corner and plunge straight into the unknown. Great fun.

Your character is extremely nimble, with a plethora of actions to control. Aside from being able to do the basics (running, walking, crouching, etc), he can also jump around, roll into firing position *Bodie and Doyle*-style, or sneak about on tiptoe waving a gun. The animation is superb throughout – indeed, all the graphics are fantastic, as are the sound effects (*Crusader* features full speech, too). The controls can be bemusing at first but soon become second nature; aiming and firing may take a little longer. Draw your gun and your character immediately stands still. A small crosshair appears, and the movement control changes to allow you to rotate left and right and perfect your aim. Don't worry; this sounds unwieldy and confusing, but it isn't – it's bloody good fun. The following is a typical 30-second extract of gameplay...

Destroy! Destroy! Destroy!

Having disabled the security alarm, you burst in through the door, take out the security guard in the corner and immediately crouch down behind a packing crate. On the other side of the room stands another guard. He draws his weapon and walks towards you. Like a hero, you do a *Bodie and Doyle*, roll out from behind your cover and shoot the sucker in the kneecaps. Ha! But lawks-a-merc! The security camera spots you; an alarm sounds. Suddenly another guard appears in the doorway. You spin on your heel and fire – but miss. Fortunately, your stray bullet hits a barrel, which does the decent thing and explodes in a mass of flames. The guard catches fire and runs past you, screaming, before collapsing in a little pile of ash on the floor. Phew.



In other words, first rate, daring, yet believable heroics. Best of all, you can destroy almost everything you see – the attention to detail is awesome. Pissed off with that chair in the corner? Then pump some lead into that sucker and watch it spin around! Don't like monitor screens? Blow 'em away! That snivelling, unarmed maintenance man getting your goat with his desperate pleas for mercy? Shoot him in the head! Other delights in store include the ability to manipulate remote control combat droids, and the odd trip in an armed-up tank. Started drooling yet? You should do. It's the most addictive game I've played in ooh, yonks. You'll love it.

Crusader should appeal to just about everybody: quest heads will love the snooping and problem-solving, strategy fans will lap up the fine 'realism' of the combat engine and the variety of weapons at their disposal, and action fans will spodge as the bodies fall like blood-soaked dominoes.

If you like your games to be involving, thoughtful and exceedingly brutal, you really ought to get hold of this. And that's an order, goddamnit. **Z**



(Top) Most of the rooms are extremely detailed and quite complex.

(Above) Enemy AI improves as you play. At first they're all pretty docile...

(Bottom left) ...Later on they get quite tough. You're not exactly difficult to spot, though!



Roll out the barrel

It's a fair bet there's a whole generation of PC game players out there who are developing a phobia about barrels. *Doom* kicked it off with the waterfalls of flesh that followed each stray shot at these highly explosive little buggers. Now *Crusader* takes the phenomenon one step further down the path to carnage city. Dotted about each of the levels you'll find your friend and mine, the barrel full of dangerous explosives. Sometimes they just blow up. Sometimes they roll across the floor... and then blow up. Sometimes they cause a chain reaction and make just about everything blow up. Barrels – a true menace to society.

Score

91

Action, adventure, strategy, people getting their heads blown off... need I say more?

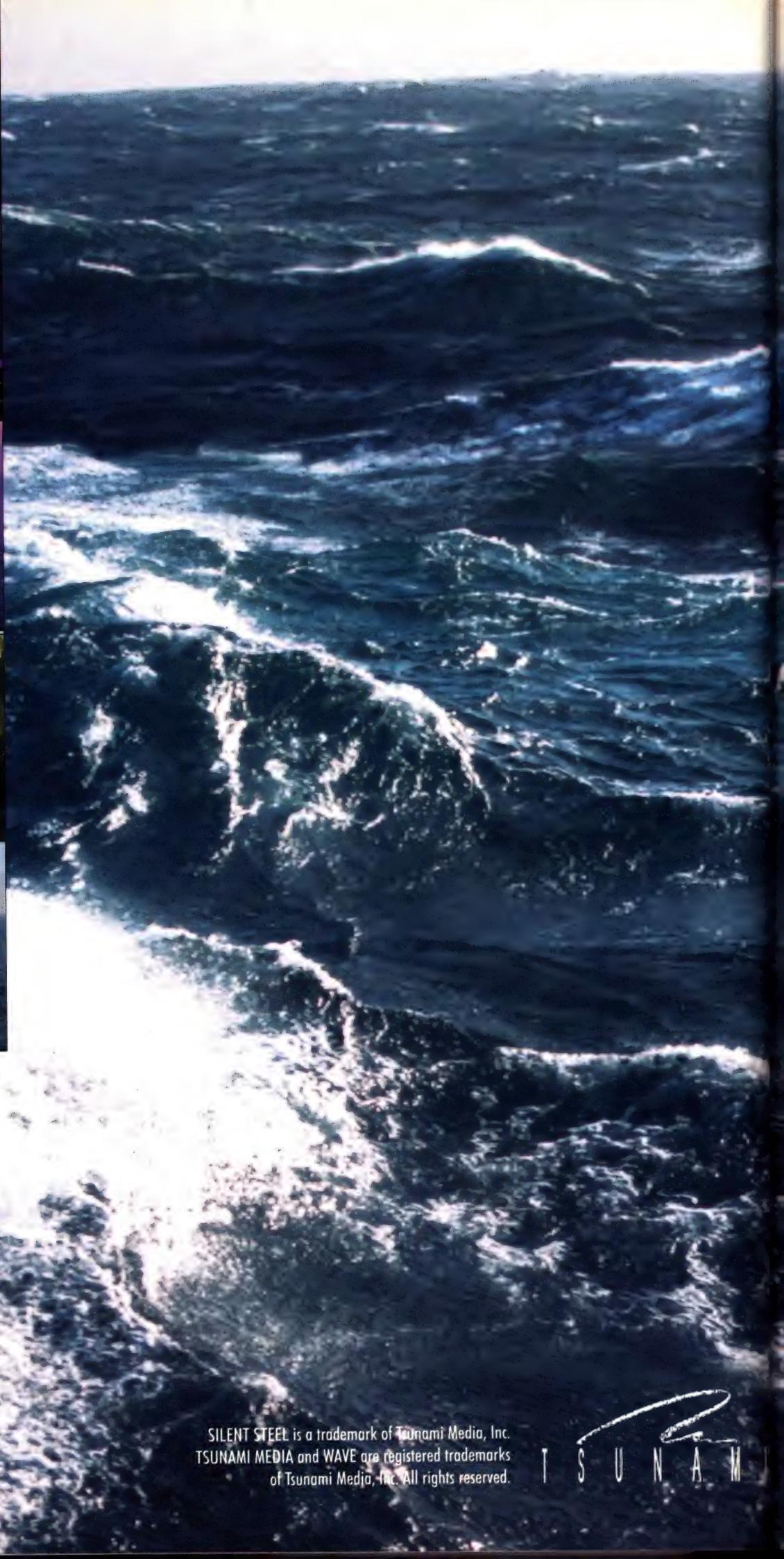
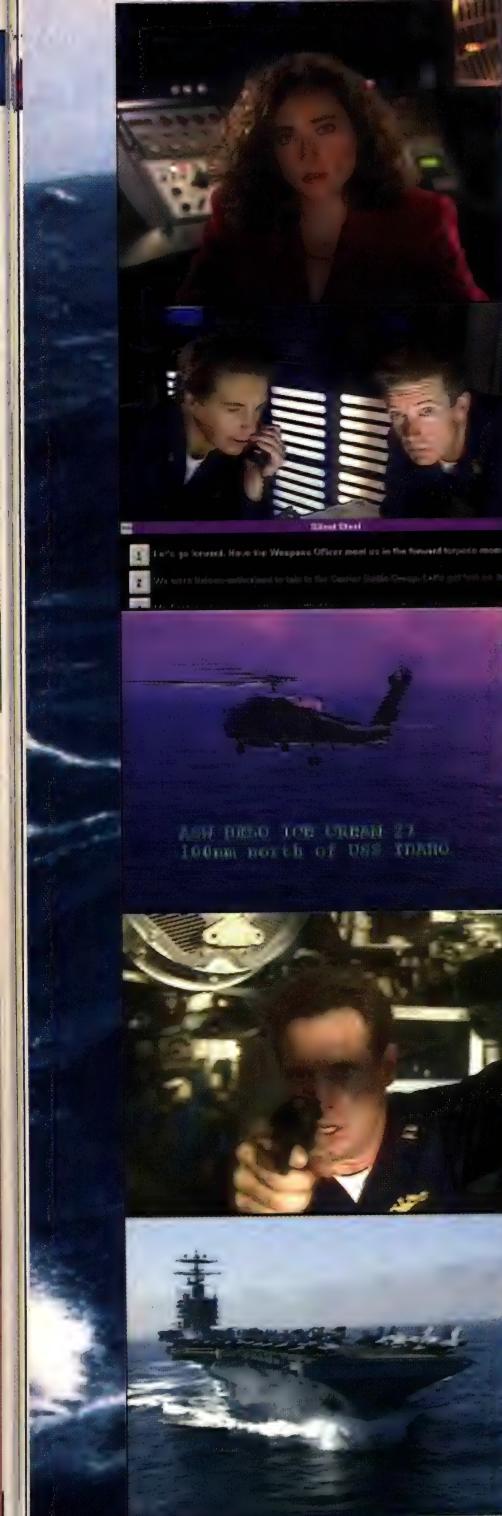
Price: £49.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549442



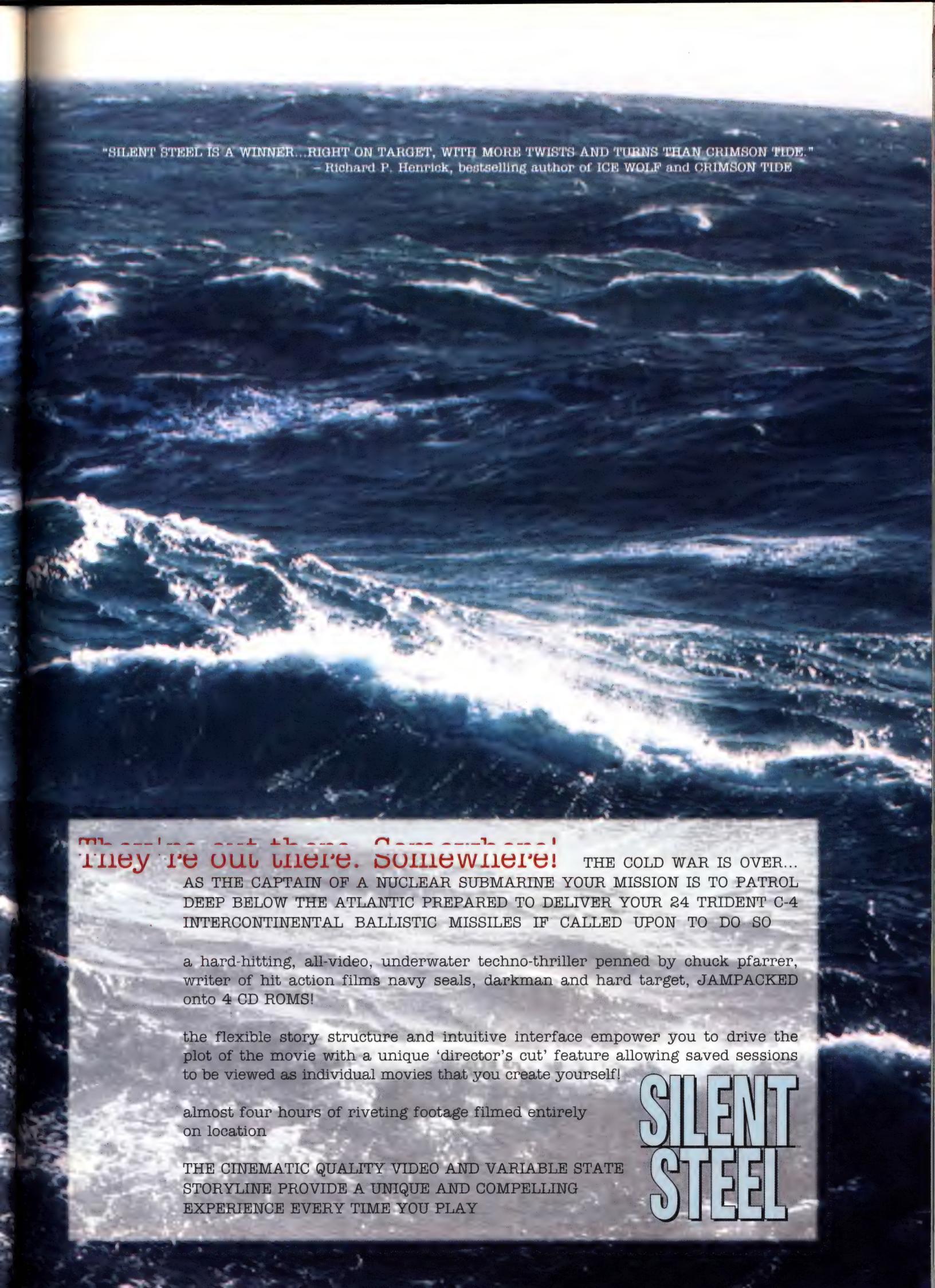
GATEWAY2000
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Worms

Patrick McCarthy's dog had worms once. His garden ended up looking like a giant bowl of spaghetti bolognese.



(Below) Although it looks simplistic, the presentation of *Worms* is very effective.

(Right) Choose your team names and become emotionally attached to each worm.



(Right) The rendered cut scenes are all excellent quality.



YOU MIGHT SUPPOSE THAT THE worm is a pretty unlikely creature to be made into the central character for a game. Your average worm registers a big blank zero in the cute-factor stakes, which is why, for example, it never stars in adverts or has nature films made about its lifestyle. All right, so it may get the occasional wriggle-on part as *Victim One*, in a warts-and-all splatterfest feature on the life of the *Early Bird*. But since it's unable to smile winsomely at the camera, scarcely responds to being stroked, and refuses point blank to wear amusing clothes for tea adverts, its chances of making the A-List of wildlife documentary subjects is remote.

When you think about it, however, worms are decidedly cool characters. Worms are hermaphroditic, so they have complete, fully working sets of both male and female sex organs at either end of their bodies. And being

essentially bendy tubes (according to my *Big Book Of Garden Things*), they're also extremely flexible. In short, if they wanted to, they could spend their entire lives shagging. With themselves. In other words, without having to go to the trouble of washing, putting on their best clothes, or even leaving the house. But they don't. They go out and meet other worms, and shag with them instead. That's cool. I mean, what other life form would still put the effort in? No human being, that's for sure.

Red hot limbless sex

So is this game an RPC, based on the attempts of one worm to motivate itself into going out and trying a few chat-up lines, instead of staying at home with a

bottle of wine, a gardening video and a mirror? No such luck. A quick glance at the screenshots dotted haphazardly around these two pages would put the nix on this idea and, in fact, probably prompt you to guess that *Worms* is a bit of a *Lemmings*-alike. But it's not, so you're not quite as clever as you think you are. Are you?

No

No, you're not. In fact, it's a tactical battle game that up to four people can play at once, on one computer. And luckily for we British types, you can do so without having to squeeze up against each other or touch other people's hands by mistake (we all know how unpleasant that is). It's turn-based, so there's none of that body contact unpleasantness that seems to be so popular on the Continent.

So what do you do?

Basically, you take it in turns to try to do untold harm to each other's mini-army of four worms. There's an array of weapons to use, along with other features like the ability to teleport about the levels and use a number of Lemmings-style tools on the landscape. And the last one left with any live worms is the winner. Disappointingly, for lovers of real-life worm-mutilation, the penknife does not feature among the weapons. Neither do worms split into sections and then wander happily away. But the up-side is you don't have to eat the dead ones, either.





Gentlemen, choose your weapons

How worms manage to carry all this stuff around without pockets – or, indeed, arms or hands – is beyond me. But there you go. There are two sets of kit, the first of which is mostly weapons and hand-to-hand nastiness and the second a little more sneaky, tactical and, in fact, noncy.



(From left to right):

Bazooka: Decimates worms and large portions of the surrounding landscape. Its use is not really recommended in confined spaces (in a sleeping bag etc). **Homing missile:** Picks off a worm that thinks it's safe and sound on the far side of the screen. It homes in, sort of unerringly, on the formerly relaxed target. The accuracy of the missile also depends on wind direction. **Grenade:** No arms to throw with means nothing to your Segment Warrior – they head it instead. Luckily these are timing devices, or they would be markedly less successful. **Cluster bomb:** Again, these cluster bombs must be headed, at the same time allowing for wind direction and surrounding overhangs. **Shotgun:** Having trouble with abusive co-combatants? Give them two barrels with this and see if they still reckon you look like a hamster's penis.

Uzi: Chews up the decor and makes the target worm jiggle about like Jimmy Somerville. Hmm, not a pretty sight.

Dragon punch: Don't ask how something with no limbs can execute a punch. They just do, all right? Look, I didn't design the thing...

Fireball: Not particularly damaging. In fact, you'd probably do more damage with a box of matches after five pints of Guinness.

Dynamite: Put it down and run away quickly, before it blows up.

Mine: Put it down and hope an innocent villager steps on it in fifteen years' time when the war has long finished.

Airstrike: Wipe out worms and entire allotments in one fell swoop.

Teleport: No prizes for guessing exactly what you do with this little baby. Yes! Surprise surprise, you teleport with it.

Turn-based? That sounds a bit dated

Weeeell, it is, really. But that doesn't mean it isn't any fun. It's only intended as a multi-player game, and no attempt has been made to make a one-player game with increasingly harder levels along the lines of *Cannon Fodder*, or others of that ilk. Which means that, on your own, *Worms* is more boring than Derek Wilton. As a multi-player game, it's considerably better.

There are supposed to be millions of different levels, generated afresh each time you play, but none look wildly different. And the alleged 'humour' of the worms' responses mid-scrap makes Hale and Pace look like a top comedy act.

Then again, there are all sorts of ways to customise the game, from selecting the weapons available, to deciding how many rounds you'll fight, where the worms are placed and how long you get to complete each move. And you can do

all sorts of zany stuff like give your teams obscene names, import .WAV files for the sound effects, and graphics files for the levels. This means you're free to battle it out on a large picture of a naked Hattie Jacques, to the sounds of Lloyd Grossman whipping a child on *Junior Masterchef*. If you want. But it doesn't alter the essentially repetitive gameplay. Still, it's by no means bad, obviously it's far better as a multi-player game, but it seems to be the sort of thing you'll love or absolutely hate. **7**

Things to learn and use

(for cowardly, 'tactical' types, from left to right)



Blowtorch: For boring sideways through solid bits and burning foes.

Drill: For drilling.

Batpote: For climbing the sides of buildings while wearing homemade underwear.

Bungee jump: For New Zealanders to while away the time in their tedious country.

Girders: For women to squeeze their stomachs into tight dresses.

Kamikaze: For blowing up yourself and your surroundings.

Prod: For pushing someone over the edge.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 386DX

Hard Disk Space: Minimal

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score

84

Think multi-player.

Think *Lemmings*.

Think *Cannon Fodder*.

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** November

Publisher: Ocean

Tel: 0161-832 6633



GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."



(Left) It may not look much, but it's the gameplay that counts.



SHELLSHOCK



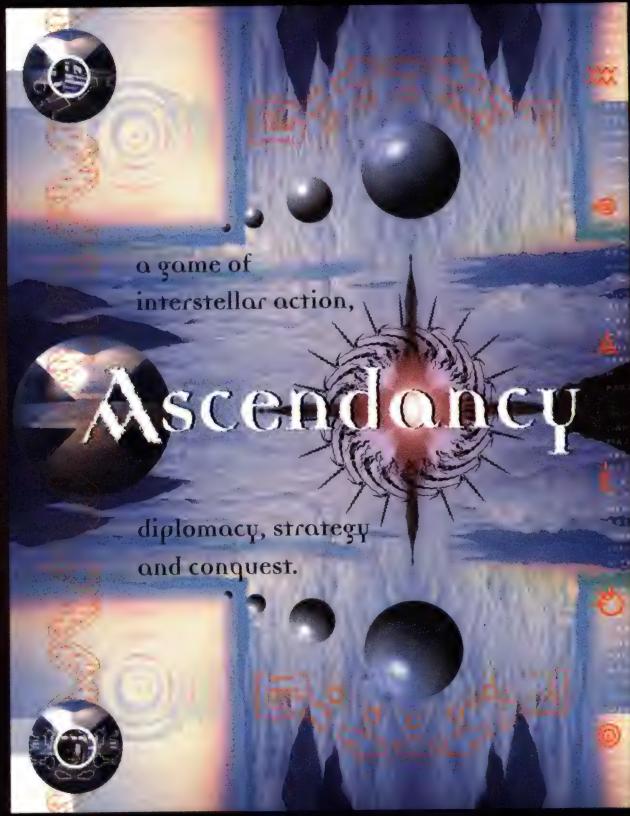
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and military might.
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Ascendancy over a galaxy?



- Ascendancy's sophisticated artificial intelligence extends gameplay and offers in-depth interaction and diplomacy with alien species.
- The game features superb SVGA graphics.
- The comprehensive tutorial mode coupled with a simple and intuitive interface ensures instant access to the game and in-depth help throughout.
- Digital soundtrack featuring an original score and realistic sound effects.



Mortal Kombat 3

It's small wonder there's anyone left alive to fight in this third game of the series. Charlie Brooker's a bit of an animal anyway so we let him have it.



AN AWFUL THOUGHT POPPED INTO my head while playing Mortal Kombat 3 on the office PC. Okay, you know how the 'plot' of the Mortal Kombat series revolves around the concept of these legendary fighting tournaments, where infamous warriors, both dead and alive, take part in a no-holds-barred fight to the death? Well, it stands to reason that these tournaments are pretty well arranged and organised, doesn't it? I mean, you'd hire people specifically to do certain things, wouldn't you? You'd have a board of referees with a wealth of fighting experience, who could judge each encounter (and cheer whenever someone's head flew off). You'd have sponsors, and a televised coverage deal with a major network. You'd have a PR bloke who'd walk around in a crassly fashionable suit clutching a mobile phone, being such a smarmy wanker that you wanted to smash his insincere

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and all usual compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, gamepad

little face in after ten minutes. Then finally, right down at the bottom of the scale, you'd have... the cleaner.

Yup, the cleaner. Because some poor bastard's got to clean all that mess up. So there he is. Let's call him Shane. There's Shane, down on his hands and knees, trying to get a grip on that slippery pile of intestines that's curled up on the floor against that table. He's already picked up five ribcages this morning – one of which still had a set of lungs inside – and he knows once



he's got rid of the intestines, he's still got to mop the floor (again), swab down the walls, pick the discarded teeth out of the carpet, and have all the curtains dry-cleaned. What an appalling job.

Not that you should give a toss about any of that. I suppose I'd better tell you if the game's any good or not.

Frantic fistng action

Things look good from the off on this one. There's an abundance of large, nimble sprites (in the form of digitised actors and actresses), neat background effects, a CD-quality soundtrack (er, which is streamed in from the, er... CD), and extremely responsive controls. The whole thing looks, feels, and plays just like the arcade original, right down to the special cheats and codes and things. Sleek, that's what it is – sleek. Oh yeah, and by the way, it's slightly faster than the PlayStation version. That'll knock the smiles off their faces, right? What's that? Oh yeah, they've got Tekken, haven't they? Poo.

Anyway. Grab a friend and a couple of joypads, and the fun starts right there

(Left) "Meet the gang 'cos the boys are here, the boys to entertain you..."

(Above) Jeez, arterial sprays are cool. Heh heh heh.



(Left) "Ahh-ah-ah-ah... Stayin' alive... Stayin' alive..."

(Far Left) Raptou, the amazing all-purpose kitchen utensil, amazes again with its versatility.



and then. You'll be leaping, ducking, punching, kicking, and committing other serious assaults upon each other's person in no time. Learning how to eat one another's liver, however, may take a little longer. *Mortal Kombat 3* has an inexhaustible array of special moves, which come in all shapes and sizes. Now, you're used to seeing beat 'em up characters shooting 'fireballs' at each other during a fight – but would you believe *homing missiles*? A few flicks of the joypad, and 'tis done. Apart from increasingly ludicrous 'projectile' moves such as that, there's also a veritable arseload of things to discover: multi-hit combos, bone-crunching throws... and of course, the *Mortal Kombat* speciality – the finishing move (see panel).

It's a laugh and a half, make no mistake – instantly playable and highly addictive – but it does feel a little outdated. This is partly due to the fact it's taken a while to make the arcade-to-home transition, but mainly because of what I rather pompously call the 'Ariel Effect'.

The Ariel Effect

To witness the Ariel Effect in action, all you have to do is switch on the television and wait about 13 seconds.



(Left) Antoine realised it was time to leave. Jeanette loved him no more. Forlorn, he fetched his hat and scarf from the familiar hatstand, and shuffled through the doorway with a morbid silence. Silence. And now, he understood that he must never return. The love that had been was dead now. He would live out the rest of his days alone... alone, that is, except for one thing. Memories. For unlike love, his memories would linger on forever.

(Left) Neck-crunching: a popular feature of this tournament.

(Far left) One large Stryker on the rocks please, Freeze.

Score

90

Did I mention that you can even punch your opponents up through the ceiling?

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: GT Interactive

Tel: 0171-258 3791

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Death becomes her, him, them, and him over there

Finishing moves can only be performed by the victor during the final round of any given fight. While your opponent stands stunned, desperately trying to remember just why he entered the contest in the first place, you perform an unbelievably complex move on the joypad (usually involving more keypresses than typing up the average doctoral thesis) and hope for the best. If you're successful, the skies darken and Whoosh! One of the following things happen:

1) A **Fatality**. The original and best death move. Fatalities are not nice. Your character proceeds to do something positively medieval to the shocked opponent. Like ripping their arms off. Or tearing their skin to shreds. Or chopping them into tiny pieces with a giant rotor blade. This is a job for Shane and his mop.

2) A **Babality**. For some inexplicable reason, you turn your opponent into a gurgling babe-in-arms. Charming.

3) A **'Friendship'**. Even more inexplicably, you do something nice to your opponent, such as giving them a present, or performing a party trick for their delectation. It's a gesture of affection, y'see? Actually, I was hoping they might have included a little fellatio or something this time round, to spice up the 'Friendship' moves, but unfortunately they haven't. Maybe next time.

4) New one this – an **Animality**. For reasons beyond the realm of normal human understanding, you turn into an animal and do something positively barbaric to your opponent's screaming, twitching corpse. Enough to make David Attenborough hold his head in his hands and worry about the state of modern culture.

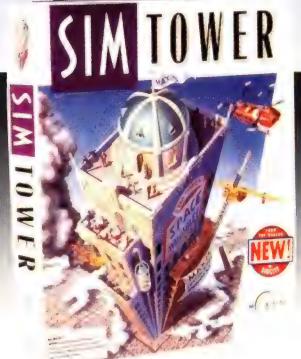
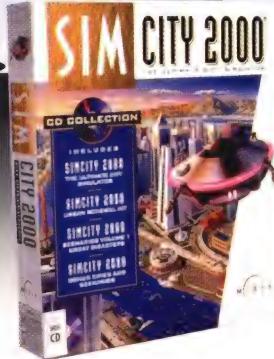
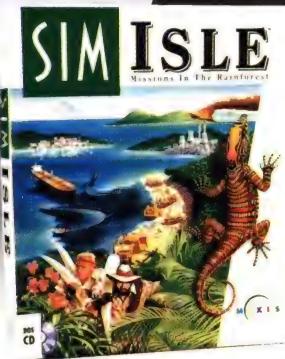




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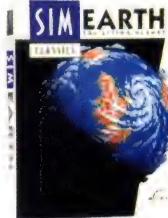
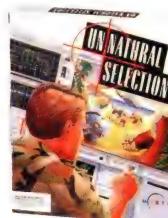
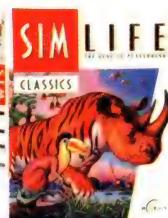
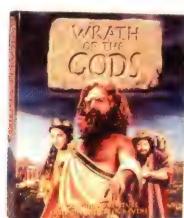
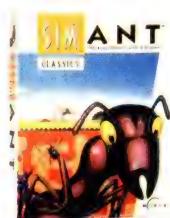


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Why does Nayim have to wear super strength condoms? Because he can lob Seaman over fifty yards. That was Jeremy Wells' best football joke. By the time you've finished reading this review you'll be in tears.

(Right) The management bit isn't up to much. There's just not enough for a manager to do, and it's best described as an extra rather than an integral part of the game. *FIFA 96* is primarily an arcade soccer game and if you want a detailed and up to date football management sim go and buy *Championship Manager 2*.

(Below right) How many camera angles? Seven actually, and what's more, the game is playable from just about every one of them. You won't find yourself changing them much while you play, but it's nice to have the choice.



GAMEPAD AT THE READY, SPEAKERS up full, straight out of the CD case and into the caddie. Fingers crossed, say a little prayer, the *FIFA 96* CD whirred away in the drive...

Welcome To Virtual Stadium

Bloody Hell! I mean, you really just can't help but be amazed by the standard of presentation: the graphics, the sound, the music. It's like your PC's swiped Jim Carrey's mask and eaten it for breakfast. I was immediately wooed (well almost). Nice menu and set-up system, simple and well laid out. I opt to play a fairly friendly match. Arsenal versus Everton (shouldn't be too difficult), configure my gamepad, switch to SVGA mode (it is running on a P75 after all), sit back and wait for the match to start.

Hey that's Motty introducing the teams, isn't it? – smart! Don't bother messing with the tactics, starting line up and all that, I just want to play. How many camera angles? Seven! Opt for 'EndZone' Cam, whatever that is. Win the toss, choose to kick off and play down the pitch. The graphics have



certainly improved: the players look smart and they actually seem to run rather than skate onto the pitch. It's all going so well, please don't fail me now. The whistle blows and kick-off to Arsenal. Ian Wright collects the ball and I guide him towards Southall's goal. Who's that coming up in support? Merson? I make a short pass as Merson flies down the wing and takes the ball in his stride. I guide him towards the corner flag as he accelerates and shrugs off two tackles. Motty's getting a bit excited, you can hear it in his voice. And the crowd, they're shouting louder than ever, they can sense this is a good run too. Almost to the by-line and then I make the cross. Long and high into the danger area. Wright's there. How do I head the goddamn ball? Southall gathers it easily (and for once holds onto it). Wright picks himself up from the floor. Good effort!

Bloody Hell! This is a bit good isn't it? What have they done? And I was worrying that it wouldn't be comparable with *FIFA* on the 3DO or even *International Superstar Soccer* on the SNES!

FIFA



So there is a god?

Well, yes. So it would seem. Not only has EA Sports improved the graphics, but it's made it a lot more hands-on to play, and it's heaped in atmosphere. It's pretty quick too, considering what it's throwing around the screen. EA's even included a modem option so you can play across the phone lines. This is going to cost me! Now where did I put the bloody manual?

A few days later...

Bloody Hell! Why are the FMV bits so jerky on my machine at home? It runs *PGA 96* all right. And what's the deal with the controls? Are there really 38 different combinations? How am I supposed to remember them all? This is a footie game, not a Rowan flight sim! And why haven't the Premiership teams from last year been updated? I want Bergkamp, Ginola, Platt and Gullit! What if I was a Bolton or Middlesbrough fan (Heaven forbid)? At least Klinsman is still there, I suppose, which will please the Spurs supporters, and East Anglian fans will be happy.

And since when did Arsenal play the sweeper system last year? And with Adams as left back and Dixon in the middle? And when I finally move everyone to the right place, switch to the correct formation and apply the tactics, why do I have to do it all over again every time I play a match? Why can't it remember? Oh yeah, and Adams hasn't got blond hair! You could forgive the developers for getting it wrong with

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

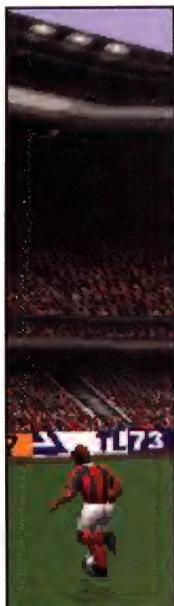
Processor: 486/66

Hard Disk Space: 3.2Mb

Graphics: SVGA and dual-speed CD-ROM drive

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, gamepad (recommended)



Soccer 96



Gascoigne, but since when has our Tony looked like Billy Idol? Other players look like they've become regulars at the local salon too. And how come when I sometimes leave a player standing still with the ball, go and make a cup of tea and sit down again, the opposition don't always manage to get the ball off him? Are they scared or something? Julian Dicks doesn't play for Arsenal!

This player select business is a bit awkward as well. Why can't it just automatically select the player nearest the ball, or at least do it a bit quicker? And how come you can do a 180 degree spin using the keyboard, but not when you're playing with a gamepad or joystick? You can't do shallow lobs or 'Rainbow' kicks either (er, whatever they are). Presumably the computer can, which certainly puts you at a bit of a disadvantage unless you use the keyboard (which, by the way, isn't really recommended) so isn't that a bit unfair? And what's this sudden death business in 'Over Time'? Surely you're supposed to play out the whole period, not stop as soon as a goal is scored? You'd have thought with this being a FIFA-licensed product, it could have got the rules right? And what's this 'Defense' and 'Offense' business, does that make my attackers 'offenders'? And this passing lark, it's not exactly what you'd call accurate, is it? And when my keeper hoofs it up pitch, why does one of my defenders insist on trying to 'bicycle kick' it back at him? Talk about dangerous play!

And a devil too...

Unfortunately, something tells me that dear Motty himself would not be at all impressed. There are plenty of, well, let's call them anomalies, that crop up with an alarming regularity with the all new *FIFA 96*, most of which could have been rectified if the developers had given it to a play tester who knew about football. (Presumably Motty himself wasn't available.) But these niggling to down right annoying things aside, is *FIFA 96* much of an improvement over the last *FIFA* game on the PC?

Well, it'd have to be an unreserved 'YES', it is much better, much more playable. For starters, you no longer feel as though you're fighting the control system instead of the opposing team (well, not as much). It's a bit tricky at first, but once you get the hang of it, you can work your way through some pretty complicated moves. Having to constantly select a player adds to the difficulty at first, but because the game looks (and sounds) so good, you want to keep playing. Little touches, such as the keeper waving back his team before he kicks the ball out, give the game a very slick feel. The commentary is quite brilliant (apart from when Motty exclaims "Oh! He's put it wide!" when you were clearing it from your own half and it goes out), as is the increasingly deafening roar of the crowd when you launch an attack. Even the music is pretty top. Overall, the presentation is great, and the playability, though not perfect, is a definite step in the right direction, but it still isn't ideal.

(Above) The most annoying things are A) The player select and B) The team set-up screen. You have to set it up every time you play - WHY!?

(Below) Welcome to Virtual Stadium Technology - you may have seen me before somewhere?

So should I wait for *Fifa 97*?

If you already own last year's *FIFA*, and you quite liked it, I'd recommend that you buy *FIFA 96* - I don't think you'll be disappointed. On the other hand, if you want a simple and easy to use control system and feel you couldn't cope with a myriad of footballing inaccuracies, look elsewhere. It's difficult to make a complete judgement without playing Gremlin's *Actua Soccer* for a while first, so I can't say whether *FIFA 96* is the best footie game on the PC at the moment, but it's definitely better than *Sensi*, which now looks terribly dated. If the player select, passing and let's face it, tackling were a little more instinctive, it would be just fab! I'll recommend it because it's very addictive, not necessarily because it's so good, but because to a certain extent you just hope that it gets better and all comes together. Over to you Trevor... Z

Score

84

Beauty with Brains, but not everyone's type.

Price: £44.99 Release Date: November

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549442

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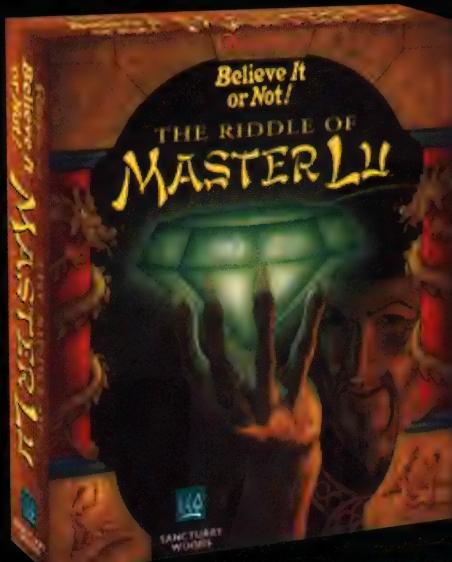
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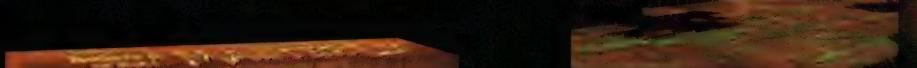


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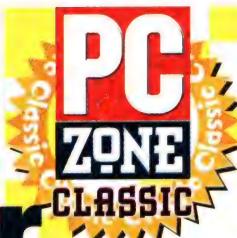
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Battle Isle 3: Shadow of the Emperor

Being somewhat mature and sophisticated, Andrew Wright prefers the word 'gorgeous' to the word 'spooge'. He tries it out on Blue Byte's sequel to a sequel.



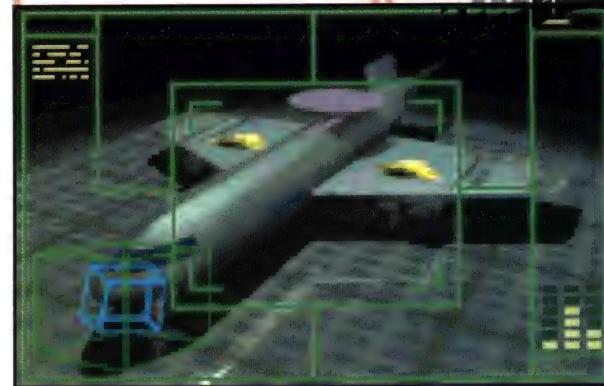
95



FLICK THROUGH THE *BATTLE ISLE 3* manual and you'll see liberal sprinklings of the words 'hex' and 'heavy tank' – but not the word 'gorgeous'. Now take a look at the screenshots – what the hell's going on? Is this a wargame or what? Well, *Battle Isle 3* might have the guts of a good old-fashioned strategy wargame but there's also a liberal sprinkling of video cut scenes and a story that almost, almost

resembles a plot. Wargame, adventure, interactive movie? It's just gorgeous – gorgeous, that's what it is.

For those familiar with *Battle Isle 2*, the Drulls have started getting stroppy again, led by Ben Harris, son of *Battle Isle 2*'s hero Val Harris. Caro, leader of the Kais, is out to stop him. Quite how she's planning to do it is anybody's guess, but luckily her plane crashes and she stumbles across a secret tunnel full



(Far left) He's the Punt that started it all.

of battle robots, battleships, assault helicopters and tanks – the usual sort of thing you encounter in caves. Oh, and some bloke called Emperor Punt Vassius appears and gives her some useful advice, like how to waste the Drullian armour, free her people and save the world. That sort of thing. Plot 3B, variation A, I think it is.

Anyway, this Emperor turns out to be a bit of a Punt, and he's ready to enslave the world, but I can't tell you any more because it would completely spoil the plot. Suffice to say that it's a rare old excuse for Blue Byte to put together a campaign consisting of 20 different scenarios, each with different objectives (annihilate the enemy, annihilate the enemy or annihilate the enemy, with the odd strategic goal thrown in).

In case you hadn't guessed, you take the role of Caro. She's a hard-looking so and so, but you'll have to be equally tough to get through the campaign – it certainly isn't easy. Then again, given the game's price-tag you don't want to finish it in a hurry. Some scenarios really take some careful planning and timing can be critical. Weather too plays an important part. In one scenario

(Left) You can set up the desktop any way you like and the game remembers your preferred layout.



In Perspective

Gives *C & C* a run for its money. Gives anything a run for its money, actually.

Command and Conquer

Battle Isle 3

Battle Isle 2



you have to push light units across a critical river at the critical moment...

Battle Isle 2 owners will be familiar with the way the game works, but the interface has come on in leaps and bounds since then. The game runs under Windows 95 (or Windows 3.11 with the 32-bit extensions), so it can be played in any standard resolution. The windows are all resizable and movable and to some extent you can alter the magnification by specifying small, medium or large hexes. That said, the game seems to play best in 800x600, but you could quite happily stretch to 1280x1024 if your PC's up to it. There's none of the sluggishness you'd expect under Windows, thanks to Windows 95's WinG graphics system.

Gorgeous?

The game looks gorgeous. I normally reserve that word for Michelle Pfeiffer but I've been told to let my true feelings show a lot more and not to bottle things up inside. I've also been told to smear the ointment regularly on the infected area, but you probably don't want to know all that personal stuff about me. You want the game, right?

Game it is then. Start with the intro: 11 minutes of well-produced video provide the background to the plot and then it's straight into battle. Okay, the videos were originally in German and have been dubbed into English with predictable results – but so what? It does look gorgeous, doesn't it?

Battle Isle 3 will use any Windows-installed sound card, and also takes advantage of enhanced cards like the AWE 32 and the new ATI accelerators for full screen video. The game accesses the CD a lot (actually, there are two CDs) and a quad-speed drive or faster will be a big help. There are a few options for tuning the detail level down; if your hardware is at the minimum level but on a fast



(Above) You don't just get to fight on land...

(Above left) All of the vehicle/menu bits are gorgeous rendered images.

486 or a Pentium, the game flies along. Be warned though, at the toughest level and on the larger scenarios, the computer moves can take up to an hour. That's seriously heavy wargaming, boys.

There's a network option too. Up to six players can play on the same side or against each other using the alliance system, and several dedicated multi-player maps have been included. The campaign game is the main option for standalone users and individual maps can be accessed again by entering codes once they've been completed. There are eight tutorial maps, with matching sections in the manual, which take you through the various combat options and unit types one by one. There's more to combat than gun versus gun – options include 'hemming' which reduces a unit's effectiveness by surrounding it with threats on more than one side, and 'blocking' which is the counter move to hemming.

Most sequels tend to be tired old rubbish because nobody has been able to come up with anything new. Luckily, *Battle Isle 3* isn't tired and it certainly isn't crap. On the outside it's a glitzy interactive movie-style thingy. Deep on the inside it's a solid wargame. And it's brilliant. Not just gorgeous, brilliant. **Z**

Score

93

Gorgeous graphics,
gorgeous game.

Price: £45.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Blue Byte

Tel: 01604 232200

 **GATEWAY2000**
"You've got a friend in the business."

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486 running Windows 95

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible sound cards

Controls: Mouse (essential)



Battle steps



The blue units are the enemy, the white ones your own units which you've already moved. Here you're about to do something constructive with the green unit, which happens to be the only one left with a move. Clicking on it brings up its stats and a nifty little picture.



A double click on the mouse produces a row of icons offering (from left to right): move, attack, info and quit.



Clicking on attack produces a weapon display and shows targets you can reach, highlighted in red. Click on the weapon you want to use...



.. and as you can see, your units then get the full 3D treatment. Wahey!



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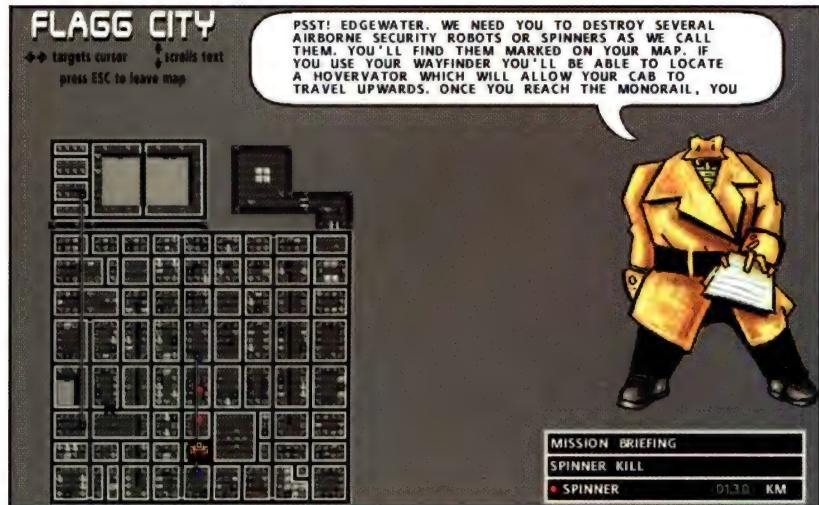
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He doesn't hold a driving licence, has never fired a gun and didn't spend seven years gaining The Knowledge. By rights Paul Presley shouldn't be reviewing the sequel to *Quarantine*, but then Shane Ritchie shouldn't be on the telly. It's a funny old world.

Road Warrior



WAY BACK BEFORE IT BECAME the Mark Hamill Employment Service, Origin released a tiny little game called *Autoduel*. It had monochrome graphics, laughable sound, came on 5.25-inch disks and was pretty much ignored by the national gaming magazines (yes, both of them). Which was a pity since it was a highly enjoyable simulation of life in a 'Mad Maxian' post-apocalyptic killer-car kind of world. As well as that, it's far more playable than *Road Warrior*, the sequel to the much-ignored *Quarantine*.

When *Doom-In-A-Taxi* hit the streets earlier this year it was just another release in a long line of novelty *Doom* spin-offs, or the nodding dog on the

back of the bandwagon. Some people thought it was a laugh, others turned their noses up at it and people with names that rhyme with Saul Dresley thought it was dull, uninspired and a waste of everyone's time. The trouble is, the game's creators thought it was worth a sequel, so now we have to put up with the further adventures of Drake Edgewater, cab driver with a mission.

Somebody ssstop themmm!

The story (which is now being told in a cartoon strip manner rather than with the dodgy FMVs of the original) sees Drake making his escape from the prison complex he had found himself in, and trying to make it on the outside



(Left) *Taxi Driver* meets *The Invisible Man* meets *Mission Impossible*. Mission briefings have never been so much fun.

(Right) (Singing) "We sow the seeds and they scatter as we plow right through their land. Their bones all break, my paint gets scraped and it's all very morally unsound..."



world. An evil criminal mutant overlord is worried that Drake's going to cause too much trouble for him and wants him dead, while the local populace are busy forming a rebellion and keep enlisting Drake to help them out.

What this means is that as far as missions go, things are certainly more varied than the first game, as Drake drives through wilderness terrains, destruction derbies and all the usual cities, towns and villages. Each of these form 'chapters' to be completed, each with a differing number of missions (or fares) to run. Of course, as a result of having a price on your head throughout, no matter where you go practically everyone is shooting at you; you can safely say that each mission is pretty much a shoot-everything-that-moves-until-you-kill-the-main-target affair.

All this does is lessen the impact of the supposedly varied missions. Since they're all basically the same from a gameplay point of view, any thoughts of strategy, planning or skill go straight out of the window. It's all drive fast, shoot quickly, stay alive.

But isn't that *Doom* all over?

That's the common misconception you see. *Doom* was fast, violent and trigger-happy, but it required some thought and it allowed you to make battleplans

(Left) "Well it seemed like a decent shortcut at the time. What're you moaning about? It's all covered in my tip."





and strategies. *Road Warrior* (as with *Quarantine*) is simply move and shoot. The challenge element isn't there and so naturally neither is the interest.

Road Warrior would be better if it was more of a driving simulation with guns rather than the basic float 'n' shootfest that it is. You're in a car, so let's be able to perform driving manoeuvres. Let's have a few handbrake turns, controlled skids, shunts and sideswipes that cause the cars to behave realistically. The real problem with it is that the cars are all supposed to be hover vehicles, and so it removes any of the aforementioned challenge that could have made the game something special.

Another problem is that the game lacks incentive. The story isn't strong or well-told enough to make you want to carry on, and since your cab is replenished magically every time you start a new mission, there's nothing to urge you to keep going. Perhaps the addition of shops with upgrades to buy, garages to allow you to repair and improve armour, engines and the like, money to be collected from each fare, might help hold your interest. Instead there's nothing. A void. El Zippo. The bleakness of a future with no hope. (We get the idea - Ed.)

Ping! And the next word is 'aesthetics'

I might as well tell you about the graphics, since it's one of the few areas in which *Road Warrior* scores well. In VGA mode things aren't much different from *Quarantine*, but now there's an enhanced SVGA mode to play with and

(Above) *Taxi Driver* meets *Children Of The Corn*. (Okay, okay, do this joke once more and you're fired - Ed.)

(Above right) The map. Each location has a bountiful number of missions to complete. Er, that's about it really.

(Bottom) That'll teach him not to tip the usual fifteen per cent.

(Bottom right) *Taxi Driver* meets the subway bit from *Predator 2*. (Admin? Get me his P45 - Ed.)



things look rather nice with it. It moves pretty zippily too and there's certainly no problem generating a sense of speed. The actual cars don't move too well, flipping around 90 degree corners Automan-style (remember that one, kids?) and they get a bit blocky close up, but things aren't that bad overall. It's no NASCAR Racing, but to its credit it's certainly no Cyberbykes.

Even money he says, "In conclusion"

In conclusion then (*Pay up - A Reader*), *Road Warrior* is a sequel too far for *Quarantine*, and considering it's the first, it's a pretty bad situation when you think about it. I wish I could be nicer about it but there's simply not enough to engage, entertain or educate. I'm not saying that the game is fundamentally flawed or anything, it's just that it's nothing to fax home about. In the same way that any product with a sufficient amount of development time usually looks competent, *Road Warrior* looks competent. It's just that it plays like the fat kid who always gets picked last and put in goal during school football matches. There are better driving games and there are better 3D action games. There aren't many better 3D driving action games, but in a field of one that's hardly a recommendation. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX

Hard Disk Space: 8Mb

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All major cards

Controls: Joystick or keyboard

Score

61

Should be placed in quarantine (groan).

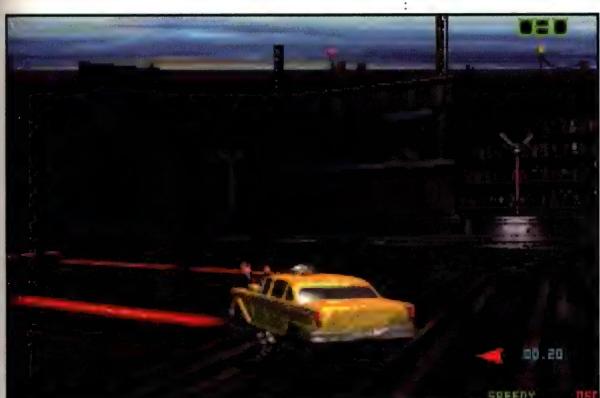
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** November

Publisher: Gametek

Tel: 01753 553445

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is a little confused. (*A little? - Ed.*)
He's just played a game that reminds him of, well, just about every game he's seen for the last few months that has pre-rendered backgrounds...

Alien Odyssey



ISUPPOSE THE BEST WAY TO EXPLAIN what this game is like is to tell you which games it's similar to, simply because it's similar to just about every pre-rendered space adventure game under the sun. In fact, saying it's similar to certain games is being a bit generous - in some cases it's more or less a carbon copy of sections from some of this year's biggest releases.

The only part of *Alien Odyssey* that hasn't been directly lifted from another game is the plot, which incidentally gives me the opportunity to issue a little challenge to you all. During my brief outline of the plot, I want you to try to keep a straight face. If you actually manage to do so, please send me a letter marked "I kept a straight face while I read about the plot in *Alien Odyssey*." If your letter is the first one

picked out of my post bag, I'll send you a free copy of the game. Probably. Ready? Okay, here goes then...

Competition extra

You are Psaph. You are roaming around the universe surveying planets (as one does) when you crash land on Betan. Fortunately for you, you are befriended by a tiger man in a big stripy catsuit. You immediately hit it off and decide to team up in an attempt to escape the planet, though obviously you have to save it from certain destruction on the way, and also kick the shit out of hundreds of killer robots into the bargain. Your quest is straightforward then - save the world (but not yours, somebody else's), kill lots of robots, and piss off home. Welcome to *Alien Odyssey*.

Did you laugh? Did you titter? Or did

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Hard Disk Space: 8Mb

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

you just yawn your head off because you've heard it all before a thousand times with ever so slight variations on the above theme? Either way, this is what passes for a plot in *Alien Odyssey*. As for the game...

It's a bit like Cyberia

The game is split into four sections. The first of these sees you tearing through a forest on a hoverbike. It's very, very similar to the arcade scenes in *Cyberia*, in as much as the computer controls the vehicle you're in, while you simply control the crosshair on the screen and click away furiously until either all your enemies are dead, or you are. Also, the graphics are very pretty, just like they are in *Cyberia*. All this said, however, it's not the best start to a game I've seen. All you have to do is shoot a few robots, while at the same time making sure you don't shoot your tiger friend, and you'll have no trouble at all getting through the forest sequence. So, the hoverbike scene is a bit crap, but at least it's short,

(Bottom) You get to ride your very own hoverbike. Cool.

(Bottom left) The cut scenes in *Alien Odyssey* really are absolutely gorgeous.

»



(Right) Hectic shoot 'em up action. Wish there was more of it in the game.



which is more than can be said for the communication bunker and armoury levels, which virtually go to make up the whole game. In these levels you'll be exploring alien environments, interacting with terminals to open doors, deploy maintenance robots etc and they seem to go on for ever. Whereas *Cyberia* had the right balance between the arcade and the adventure sections, *Alien Odyssey* bogs you down in the adventure sections for most of the game. Two arcade levels isn't really enough to break the monotony of the walk-around sections. It does look nice, though...

It's a bit like *Creature Shock*

At various points in the exploratory levels, you are treated to cut scenes which show your alter-ego doing really cool things. These cut scenes would not be out of place if you plopped them randomly into one of the exploratory levels in *Creature Shock*. However, if you've ever played *Creature Shock*, if you're honest you'll probably agree that this is no bad thing. Let's face it, who's going to complain about being depicted as an ultra-cool dude who could probably pick up several chicks at once if the mood so took him?

(Below) The arcade section. It's not *Cyberia* but it's still pretty good.



Generally, the character animation and background graphics are what save the game from dying horribly in a murky black swamp of averageness. For example, one of the 'puzzles' involves blowing up several cylinders to break into a room. As soon as you fire your gun a cut scene, er, cuts in and shows you a gorgeously over the top pyrotechnic fest. There's lots of this stuff in the game, and it all serves as a welcome diversion to the sometimes plodding adventure gameplay. I'd now like to round off our little trip through Similarity City by explaining...

It's a bit like *BioForge*

While all the backgrounds and cut scenes are pre-rendered, the main character is made up of good old polygons. This means, as is the case with *BioForge*, you actually get to control the movements of your character, as opposed to pressing one of the cursor keys and watching him walk off in the distance (as is the case with *Creature Shock* and *Cyberia*). Your character can run, jump, roll left and right, creep, crouch and generally navigate the environments without any fuss or hassle. However, unlike *BioForge*, his

battle capabilities are limited to shooting at things he doesn't like the look of. He can't punch or kick and he certainly can't perform any *BioForge*-like somersaults. The upshot of this is it gets a bit boring taking out the robots and other enemies you come across. Usually, it's just a case of firing a couple of shots and the combat scene is over.

Well, it's all looking a bit depressing at this point. I've just listed all of the games *Alien Odyssey* is similar to and compared it unfavourably with most of them. I now find myself in the embarrassing position of having to explain why I've been playing it for a day and a half. I suppose the main reason is, I've played all the games I've just mentioned and liked them all. Admittedly, *Alien Odyssey* is no match for *BioForge* or *Cyberia* but the graphics are nice and it's engrossing enough to keep me happily occupied while I wait for the release of *Cyberia 2*. **Z**

Score

77

Pretty adventure that plods along in places.

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Philips

Tel: 0171-911 3094

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Chris Anderson reviews
Sierra's new bloodthirsty
adventure and emerges
shocked, stunned and more
than a little confused.

Phantasmagoria

MAYBE IT'S JUST ME. MAYBE I'VE GOT A masochistic streak a mile wide. Who knows? Anyway, whatever the case, I hereby admit that yes, in the past I was the type of person to rent dodgy horror movies from the local video shop, only to find that although they sounded really good from the blurb on the box, they nearly always turned out to be little more than an excuse for one gory blood-drenched scene after another, with scant regard for plot or storyline.

I'm sure you know the ones I mean, or perhaps you don't. Maybe you saw a couple of them and sensibly gave up after that. Not so for me; I kept coming across a half decent title, which then meant I would go through yet another week of misery kidding myself I'd find another one. I'm sure it's probably all Stephen King's fault, or maybe Edgar

Allen Poe, seeing as it was bastards like them that got me hooked on all this macabre grotesquery in the first place.

Unfortunately for me, my penchant for masochistic activity now seems to extend to interactive movies on the PC. Okay, so I have played a few (if played is the right word) that turned out to be pretty good - *Under A Killing Moon* and *Lost Eden* spring to mind. However, for every one I've seen that's passable, there seem to be bloody tons more that are absolutely awful. So why exactly should this be so? Well, it's actually quite obvious. Without exception, all the software houses that have attempted to create a playable interactive movie and failed have made the same mistake: they've spent so much time on the presentation of the product that they've neglected to include any noticeable interaction with the player.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486

Hard Disk Space: 5Mb

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible sound card

Controls: Mouse

Phantasmaboria

Sad to say, Sierra is guilty of the same failing with *Phantasmagoria*. It looks beautiful and the acting, while not particularly impressive, can reasonably be described as passable, plus it has something you could safely call a plot. The major problem, as always with products of this nature, is that there's nothing much for the player to do from start to finish, other than click the mouse now and again to help the storyline along. I'm really quite amazed to see Sierra release a product like this, as its previous adventures positively brim over with gameplay - its last attempt at producing an adventure with horrific overtones, namely *Gabriel Knight*, is still one of the finest adventure games to be found on the PC. I have to admit I'm more than a little concerned that for *Gabriel Knight 2*,

(Right) Look, it's Benny from *Crossroads*.

(Far right) This lady tells your fortune. It's usually pretty depressing.





Movies versus games (again!)

Sierra is keen to stress that *Phantasmagoria* should be treated as a movie and not as a game. It's a brave effort on the whole, but the interactive part is maybe a little too ambitious. The game requires a pretty meaty machine and stretches over seven CDs, largely due to the superior quality of the graphics. To make it more interactive and less linear would mean including even more possibilities, more CDs and probably an even beefier machine. *Phantasmagoria* uses cutting edge technology, and in many respects it is a cutting edge game – it's just that at the moment the technology isn't available to make it as interactive as the hardened gameplayer would like. Better luck next time.



Sierra is threatening to dispense with the beautiful hand-painted backgrounds seen in the first game in favour of photo-realistic graphics, so there's a real danger the sequel could turn into a total non-interactive disaster, not entirely dissimilar to the one we have on our hands here.

Let's just say that as a game *Phantasmagoria* is rather like watching an extremely average X-rated horror movie, but with the added annoyance of having to help the thing along by solving a few embarrassingly easy puzzles.

The unconvincing storyline revolves around Don and Adrienne, a married couple who have just moved into a dodgy old mansion, only to discover the house used to belong to a mad magician who went potty and did horrible things to lots of people. Adrienne inadvertently opens an old box, which frees the spirit of the house's former occupant; the magician's spirit then takes up residence in the body of Don, who proceeds to do nasty things to everyone he meets. For the purpose of the game, you play Adrienne and control all her movements as she attempts to find a way of freeing Don from the spirit of the crazed magician.

What went wrong?

The concept of *Phantasmagoria* must have looked good on paper; Sierra must surely have been confident that Roberta Williams (creator of the excellent King's Quest series) would produce yet another winner, but unfortunately she seems to have contracted a rather bad case of 'interactive movie-itis'; as a result she has fallen into the old trap of relying heavily on pretty graphics and whatever interest the plot might generate for players, as opposed to good old-fashioned gameplay. The storyline just isn't up to



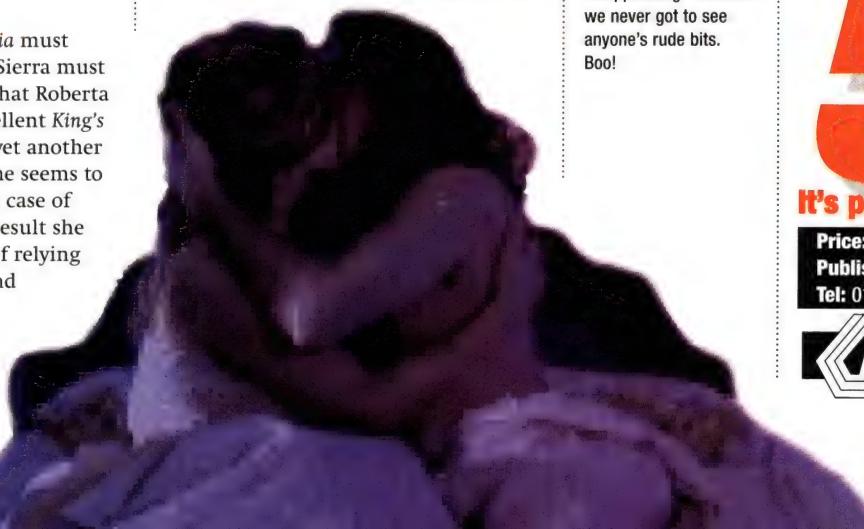
Roberta Williams' usual high standard – it is a real shame to see such a talented and successful writer abandoning her highly entertaining style.

The upshot of the poor storyline, without doubt the greatest crime of all, is that you never really feel as though you're doing anything in the game, you just sort of prompt it now and again and watch the resulting video clips. Okay, so from a purely aesthetic point of view *Phantasmagoria* looks very impressive (er, as does Adrienne – in fact Dep Ed Jeremy has fallen passionately in love with her), but there are too many problems that we just can't forgive. Instead of being challenging the puzzles are insultingly easy to solve; and the way

Adrienne moves as she walks from one place to another is unrealistic (she strolls off the screen and reappears at a very unusual angle).

To make matters worse, I managed to complete it in less than a day, despite the fact it comes on seven CDs. Frankly, considering the hype prior to its release, I expected a lot more than this. Let's just put it down to experience and hope *Gabriel Knight 2* sees a return to Sierra's previous form in the adventure game

genre. **Z**



The gory details

Yes, it really is very gory. Some of the scenes shocked even us, which is a little bit weird considering what a hardened lot we normally are. There are scenes where people get decapitated, end up with knives stuck in the middle of their heads, and disgusting things like that. There's also a rape scene, in which Don somehow manages to have his wicked way with Adrienne without actually taking his clothes off! (This particular number prompted Beattie's to refuse to sell it.) So, if you're interested in *Phantasmagoria* for the shock factor, you probably won't be disappointed. Don't expect a game as well though.



(Above) Benny's mum. It is, honest.

(Below) A disappointing sex scene. Why is it disappointing? Because we never got to see anyone's rude bits. Boo!

Score

50

It's pretty, pretty vacant.

Price: £49.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Sierra

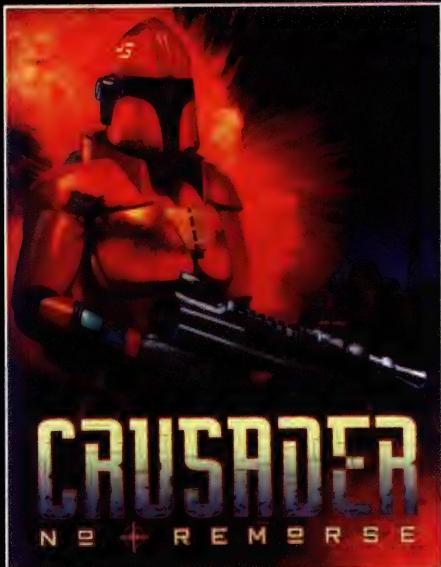
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Comanche vs Werewolf

Anything to do with helicopters, choppers and spinny things seems popular right now. **Keith Sloan** takes a good look at *Comanche 2* to see if it's a true rival to *Apache Longbow*.

HERE CAN'T BE MANY PEOPLE WHO haven't actually seen the original *Comanche*, touting as it was the new graphics technique called Voxel Space (whatever that means...). In its time it really did look a bit special, giving the *Comanche* pilot the chance to fly down valleys and ravines, skim over lakes and scare swans. That was then, but right now we're talking about the new *Comanche 2*.

The first thing I noticed after loading it all up is that nothing much appears to have changed - the graphics are virtually identical to the original and the sound effects are, er, crap. So what's new?

To be fair, *Comanche vs Werewolf* isn't a simulator as such. It does away with the more complex elements of piloting a chopper (witness *Apache Longbow*) and concentrates more on providing a thrill a minute ride. The weapon systems are simplified, as are the flight characteristics; the graphics, as I've already mentioned, remain pretty much untouched. Voxel Space strikes again! It has to be said that the landscapes still look reasonably good, even though there are times when the dreaded block monster comes clop-clop-clopping along and everything looks like something out of Legoland. Even the cockpit layout is virtually the same, although as you'd expect, the *Werewolf* cockpit is different.

Comanche vs Werewolf may be the ideal tasty beverage to go with a Big Kahuna burger, but is there anything special about it that will make you rush out and buy it? Well, if you ain't got no friends, nothing. But add a couple of mates to the multi-player link-up and you've got the vital ingredients for seriously good gameplay.

There are four ways to link up: over a LAN, a serial link, a laplink or over a modem. Needless to say, the LAN option is going to present the greatest scope for multi-player gaming, but flying with or against another person - even just one other player - is enough to transform any game into something special. You can choose to go it alone and try to smash the living shite out of up to eight other players (flying either the *Werewolf* or the *Comanche*); or you can team up, with some of you flying RAH-66s while you let the others meander around in the KA-50.

Multi-player marvellous!

It is this mixed team event that lifts *Comanche 2* above its predecessor. The layout and design of the landscapes means you can get a fright when coasting over a hill, only to be met by a flight of four mean and angry-looking KA-50s just itching for the chance to shoot you out of the sky. The valleys can be used for terrain masking

and, while other games offer this feature, it doesn't seem as real (or as necessary) as it does here. And you can add all this to the fact that the game will run swiftly even on a low-end 486. As a multi-player game it should please everyone - even those who get moist at the mention of *Apache Longbow*. **Z**



(Below) Choose your plane, team up with a partner or go solo and the sky's the limit!



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 386DX

Hard Disk Space: N/A

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick (Thrustmaster, FCS, WCS, CH Flight Stick etc)

Score

88

Not the best helicopter flight sim around, but it still has plenty to recommend it.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Novologic/US Gold

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Duncan MacDonald owns a pair of blue underpants and isn't very good at baseball. This made him the ideal person to review *Navy Strike* from Empire.

Navy Strike



(Right) Prepare for a wee bit of 'slo-mo' when approaching ground structures. 720mph? No way.

YOU KNOW HOW WHEN YOU WATCH the Bosnia Show on TV, Trevor MacDonald (or whoever) says stuff like "It's airstrike time again, because the Serbs still haven't withdrawn their cannon"? And then there's a short film of an A-10 jetting about. And a few tiny explosion-ettes on the side of a hill. And then there's some archive footage of an aircraft carrier with sailors running around? Yes?

And all the while you're sitting there thinking to yourself: "This Bosnia caper isn't half as enjoyable as the Gulf War... bring in the nukes for goodness' sake, let's have a real firework party."

Does that describe you? Do you think those things? Well, if you are like that, then you're not going to get very far in *Navy Strike* (as I discovered to my cost, very early on in the proceedings).

But I'm already drifting off on a bit of a tangent, so onto the actual game.

The game, the game

Okay, okay. *Navy Strike* is a teensy bit like a Kinder Egg, but instead of getting 'a surprise, some chocolate, and a toy', instead you'll find, on opening the packaging, that you have 'a flight sim, a military command simulator, and a whopping large manual'. Two games, combined. (And a book.) You can play the commander part of *Navy Strike* without playing the pilot bit, but not the other way around. So I'd better explain the commander bit first, eh? Take a deep breath, here goes.

Navy Strike - which is set slightly in the future - has three 'theatres of action', much like any other fighter aeroplane thingy you could mention. But unlike most other fighter aeroplane thingies around, you don't just join a theatre and get sent on missions, you actually design the missions yourself... in real-time, from an aircraft carrier

(which is American, naturally). And each theatre of action carries its own agenda, although at the end of the day these agendas add up to much the same thing.

The theatres

In no particular order, here are the three theatres of action, accompanied by a very brief overview. (In the actual game, by the way, the hefty amount of informational stuff you have to pore through is fairly mind-numbing.)

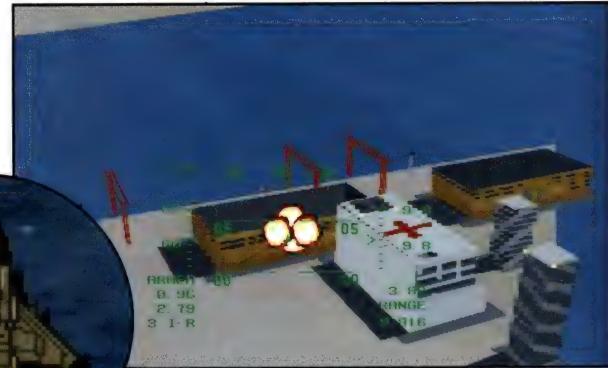
THEATRE ONE: Yes, it's Libya as usual. The main reason for your task force being in this particular locale is simple. Gadaffi and chums have a large (suspected) chemical warfare plant. You want to take it out - if it's there - but at the same time you don't want to be the cause of any 'incidents'. Not big ones, anyway. World opinion and all that.

THEATRE TWO: Yes, it's Kuwait. But Kuwait isn't actually posing the problem itself, because the folk there are so 'friendly' and 'civilised' (ie oil rich). So guess which country is the problem. Yup, it's sluggy old Iraq as usual... as the loud pinging noise from your built-in 'predict-o-meter' will have told you. It's suspected, globally, that Iraq is poised to invade Kuwait once more. Your task force is there to act as a deterrent, for as long as is humanly possible. Restraint, basically. Then maybe a little slap here and there. Then more restraint. And so on. If the invasion does start, though, then it's time to resist big time (and to hold out until reinforcements arrive).

THEATRE THREE: Oh no, not the China Sea again. Snooze. (Why can't we attack Wales or France for a change?) Anyway, here's the story. Six countries have claims on the Spratly Islands

(Right) Mission: check out the status of a neutral port. Do not, repeat do not, fire upon it. It is imperative that you release no weapons whatsoever, as such actions could lead to the third world war breaking out.

(Far right) Ooops.



(Right) A quick scan of the cockpit dash reveals something of extreme importance: it's 12.16 - only 14 minutes 'til lunch.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 486DX2/33

Hard Disk Space: 4Mb

Graphics: SVGA, VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

(oil again). The UN is seeking peaceful agreement. (Oh no - A reader.) China has suddenly tested world resolve by announcing a No Fly Zone over the islands. Your little task force is there to oppose their enforcement of this zone. But again, be careful of what you shoot at.

Get the drift?

As I said earlier, if you run full pelt into *Navy Strike* with all guns blazing, you'll be taking an early shower. Your role as commander is sort of like being a ninja air traffic controller. And, as also mentioned earlier, the game's in real-time (you can speed it up, but more often than not you'll want to slow it down, which you can't). Once you've got your early warning radar planes airborne, your map screen will contain more dots than you'd find at the annual 'Worthing and Hove old age pensioners called Dorothy' convention. These blips are all potentially hostile planes or boats... but then again, maybe they're neutral. Meanwhile you'll be under a constant barrage of radio messages from your superiors: alerting you to this; warning you not to do that; and on and on and on. It gets complicated.



The complicated bit

Try this for instance: iffy radar blip on map screen; send out one plane to eyeball while you deal with something else; much time passes; blip turns out to be 10 enemy fighters; allied pilot gets shot down as a result. Boo! Alternatively you send out 50 planes to intercept; blip turns out to be a giant pigeon or something; meanwhile your carrier is under attack and you don't have enough CAP aircraft in the vicinity - and the few still on deck contain the wrong payloads, because you'd intended to send them on a deep inland sortie, three hours hence. The scenarios are numerous, and if I went into detail we'd be here all day, but here are the hats you have to wear.

Air traffic controller one moment, resources manager the next - and then tactical military genius two minutes later.

Or, indeed, two minutes before.

Oh, and you've also got the plum job of 'waypoint operative' - you manually input all the routes for the lads basically, and there are loads of lads on a busy aircraft carrier. For way of

relaxation, though, you may decide to become a 'lad' yourself during a less hectic moment, which brings us neatly to the pilot part of *Navy Strike*.

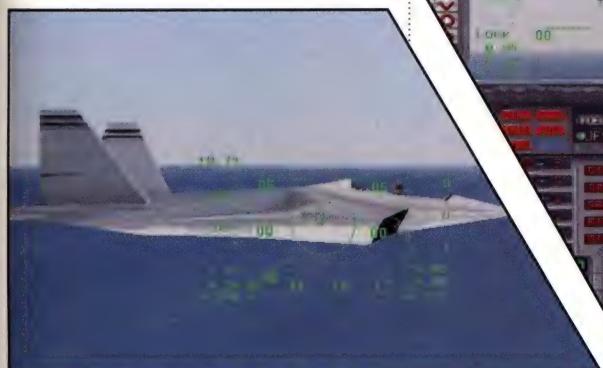
Up, up and away

You've spent the first two hours of the game sending up planes and studying reports. So what next? How about clicking on an allied aircraft dot on your commander's radar overview doofie? This brings up a mono (ugly green and white) movie of what it's currently up to. Sit and watch for as long as you like but, unless you're a complete tosser, you'll eventually be clicking on the 'enter plane' icon.

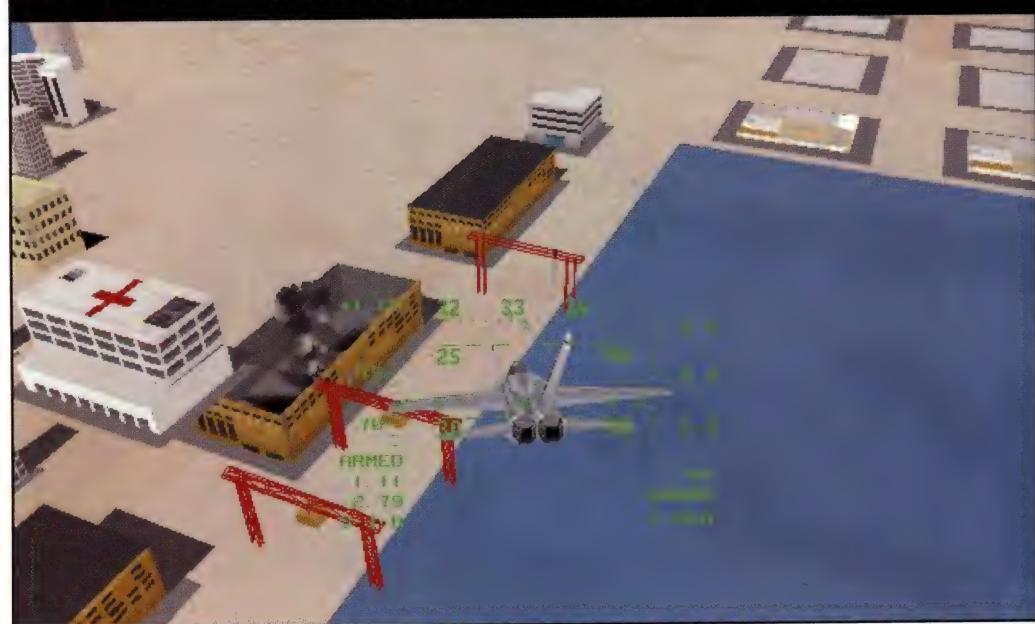
Shazam!

You're in a Rowan flight sim. You relieve the mouse of duty and grab the joystick instead. Yippee! And the plane you just so happened to click on (let's assume) is an FA18-E which is closing fast on an unidentified aircraft (which purports to be a passenger jet, en route to Germany). Mission: identify contact, and escort it to safety, if it's what it claims to be. (And don't forget, you made this mission yourself, it's one you prepared earlier.) Before long you see a distant grey blob, and it's closing fast. So you hit the airbrakes and whack

»



FRUM Scramble 12 We have bogies at 3 o'clock. Incoming: <2 miles.



(Above) Damn! Missed the bloody hospital!

whatnot, then you're going to fail the multiple choice 'exam'. I failed it with honours, which is why you've got VGA screenshots.)

(3) Slightly glitchy texture-mapping... at times you can see where bits of sea, sky or land have been joined together. (Is 'joined together' the technical term?)

(4) The sunglare's a tad OTT. Point even roughly towards Sol and you can see nowt! Yes, nowt! (Bar a bright white monitor screen for about, ooh, a zillion seconds. At this point it's perhaps useful to have sunglasses to hand.)

(5) Rowan games never have hills, and *Navy Strike* is no exception. Everywhere is completely flat. Even China's flat, for God's sake. On the commander's map screen (in the Libya scenario) I nominated what was called 'a hill' as a waypoint. I flew there, and discovered it was in fact a tiny rectangular polygon, about one inch tall. (I dropped a bomb on it in disgust. Then I got shot down.)

(6) 90% of the keyboard commands. They're obscure at best, ridiculous at worst. CTRL/ALT/F7 for flares anyone? (I'm exaggerating, but Rowan Software's

dictionary obviously doesn't contain the word 'ergonomic'.)

(7) There's more I'd like to mention, but I'm running short of space.

To finish on a plus

Ultimately however, and even with all the crap things taken into account, *Navy Strike* is actually rather good. In fact it's better than that – it's very good. At times it even becomes bloody excellent. Once the atmosphere kicks in, you're hooked. You have to be there really, but take my word for it. Anyway, the score I've given it makes it a PC Zone classic, which is praise indeed.

So how do I sum it all up? Well, "It's greater than the sum of its parts" is just about the naughtiest game reviewing cliché in the history of the entire universe, so instead I'll say that both game elements complement one another to the point where they blend almost seamlessly into a weird, infinitely diverging 'megaspiral'. (You what? – Ed.)

Score

90

Navy Strike is two games in one... and a book!

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Tel: 0181-343 7337

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

the Padlock View key. (I refuse to use the term Virtual Cockpit because it contains the word 'Virtual'.) Anyway, moments later you're flying skilfully beside a 737. You buzz round it a few times, corkscrew fashion, seeing how close you can get, going for rakish angles and suchlike. Fifteen minutes of aerobatic tomfoolery follow, until you suddenly remember that this 737 is, of course, stuffed chock-full of German businessmen. Sausage-eating autocratic bastards. Escort them to safety? Bog off. You've already given them an impressive airshow, and now it's time for them to pay. Another nifty airbrake/throttle/roll manoeuvre sees your Hornet nestled nicely behind the 737, and a couple of taps of the red joystick button does the rest. You follow the burning airliner visually as it plunges down to the special 'water airport' below.

Er, and then you get flung out of the game – for not taking it seriously enough. It's enough to drive you mad... Damn! Damn! Damn! Two hours! Two bloody hours! Damn! Bastards!

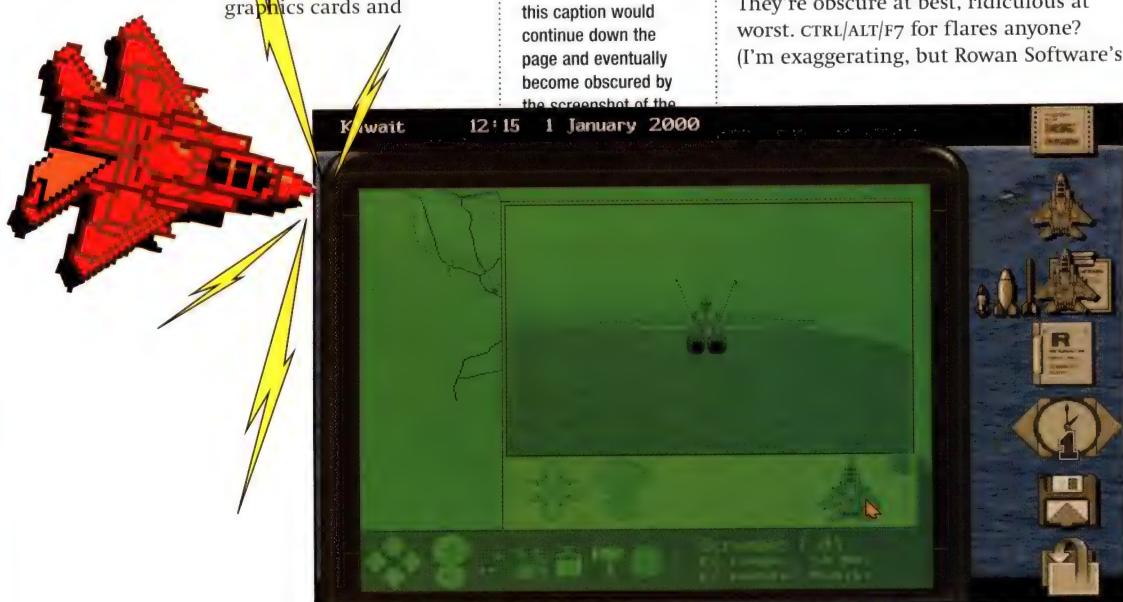
Dodgy bits

There are always dubious bits, even in your most favourite games. So having said that, here's an entire paragraph devoted to *Navy Strike*'s dodgy bits:

(1) The commander's interface (maps, waypoints) has a wee bit of a 'clumsy' feel to it. You do get used to the thing eventually, but I reckon it could have been better implemented.

(2) Rowan Software's bloody SVGA routines. If you're not a computer engineer, and don't know about graphics cards and

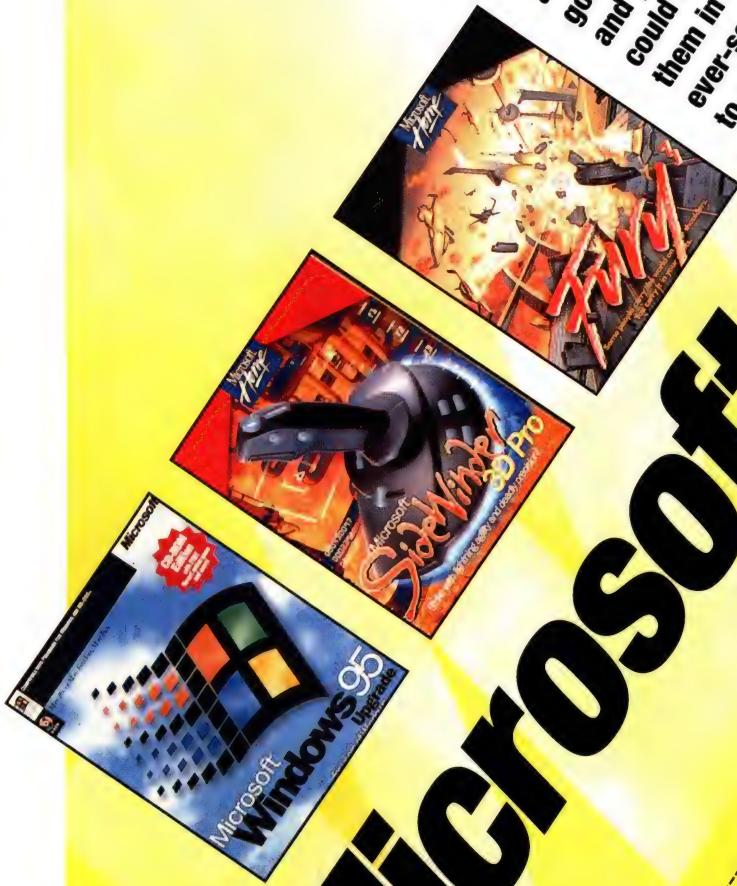
(Bottom) If I explained what those icons do, this caption would continue down the page and eventually become obscured by the screenshot of the



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- Fury 3
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- Terminal Velocity
- All of the above

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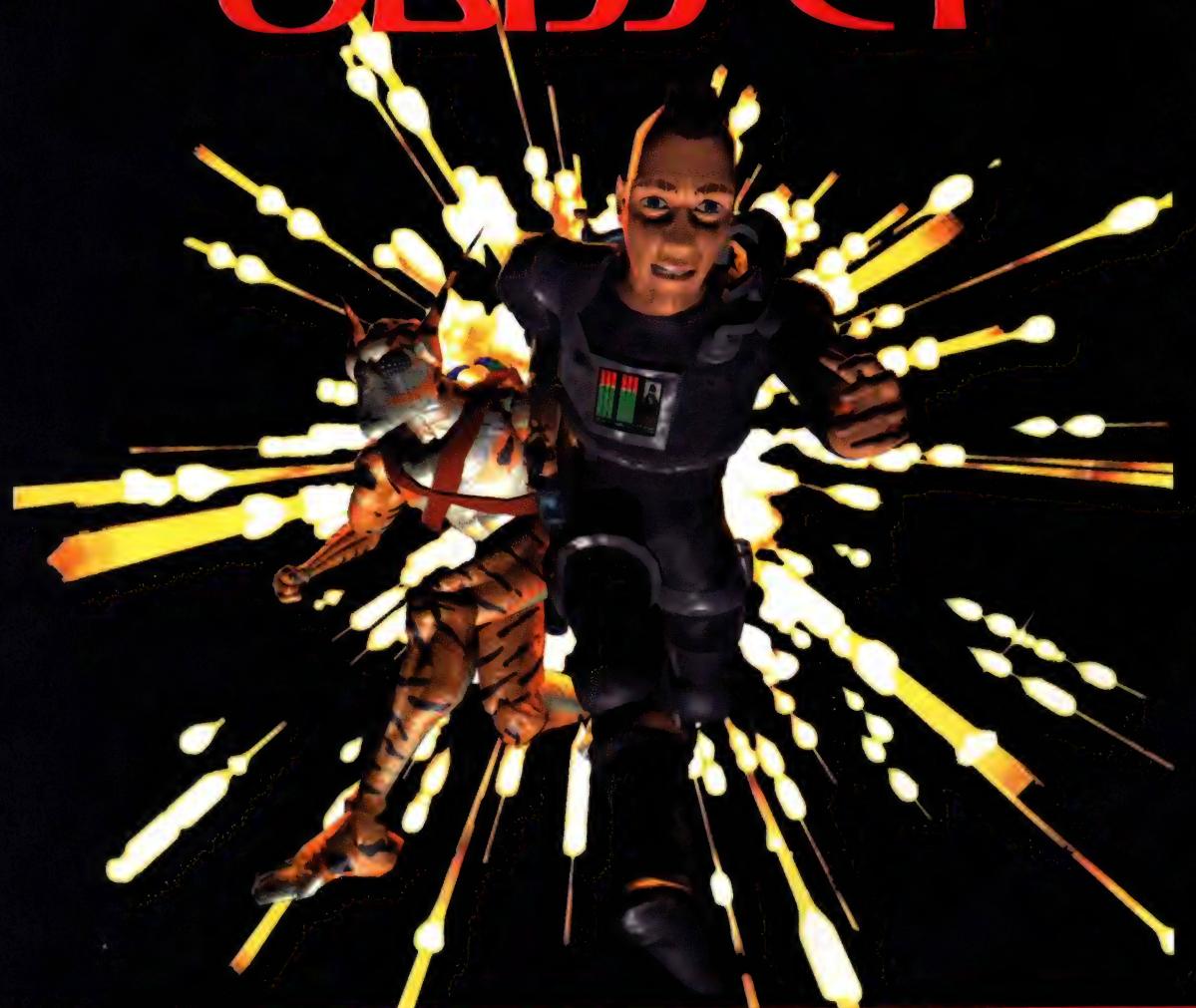
Name:

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er 1995; the judges' choice will be entered into Dennis' employees or otherwise we'd have half America sending us letters.

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COMPETITION



COMPETITION

WIN! WIN! WIN!

Those splendid peeps at Empire Interactive are so chuffed with what developers Rowan have done with *Navy Strike* that they've been totally struck down with a bout of generosity and decided to have a bit of a giveaway.

To win any of the fabulous prizes, all you have to do is send in your answers to the questions on the coupon below, along with your name and address and a picture of your sister or girlfriend on holiday in a bikini* and you'll automatically be entered into our prize draw. The first five entries out of the *PC Zone* underwear drawer will win the following:

FIRST PRIZE:

A 'Flying Start' flying lesson
A rather super leather flying jacket
A copy of *Navy Strike*



SECOND PRIZE:

No 'Flying Start' flying lesson
A rather super flying jacket
A copy of *Navy Strike*

THREE RUNNERS UP:

Won't get to go flying or prance around in a swanky leather number, but they will receive a copy of *Navy Strike*

Fill in the coupon below, cut it out (a photocopy will do) and send it to:
PC Zone, Navy Strike Compo, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

*This last bit is optional, but we're only human and searching through all those entries late on a Friday evening can get very lonely.



Rules

All entries must be received by Friday 15 December 1995 and no correspondence will be entered into... so for God's sake, don't call us. No Dennis employees or their relatives are allowed to enter, and neither is anyone who works for, or is related to anyone who works for Empire Interactive or Rowan Software otherwise we'll send Jase our Art Ed round to sort you out!

I want to look like a pilot and go up in a plane just like Biggles. But first I must answer these questions and go through my holiday snaps. (Circle the correct answers please)

1. Who is recognised as the pioneer(s) of self-powered flight?

A) Wilbur & Orville Wright B) Orville the Duck C) Ian Wright

2. Who developed *Navy Strike* for Empire Interactive?

A) Rowan Software B) Rowan Atkinson C) Rowan Boat

3. The manual to *Navy Strike* is how many pages in length?

A) 80 pages B) More than five C) Lots and lots

Name

Address

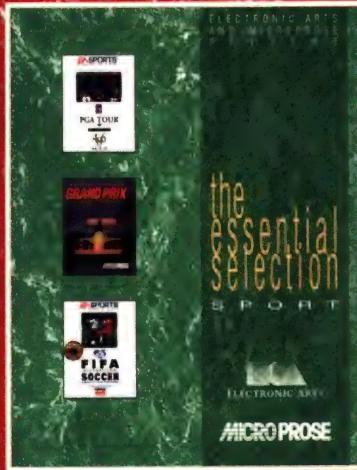
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Electronic Arts & MicroProse present.

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PGA TOUR® 486

91% PC Zone

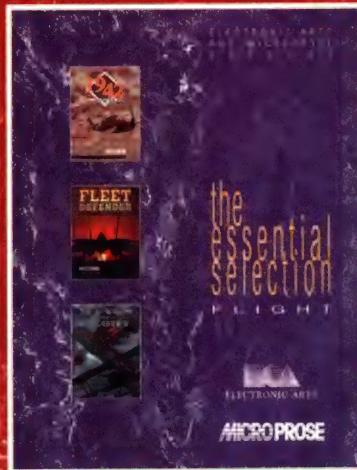
Formula One Grand Prix

86% PC Format

FIFA International Soccer

88% PC Format

FLIGHT



1942 Pacific Air War

93% PC Games

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88% PC Gamer

Wings of Glory™

89% PC Power

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9/10 PC Review

Theme Park™

93% PC Zone

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Tony Spirit

He's a tightfisted git.

Miserly old geezers, celebrity guests and the latest in budget gaming fare. Paul Presley opens the curtains on another month of low-priced sitcom-style mayhem.

Paul is sorting through his priceless collection of rare china dolls when Tony shuffles in. (Note from the PC Zone team: We haven't dared to ask why dolls are his chosen hobby.)

Tony: Paul, I need a favour mate.

Paul: Not now, O spongeful one. I've just finished arranging my valuable collection of dolls on the table for the vicar to look at when he stops by.

Tony: But I've met this guy who needs a place to stay for the night. I've already rented him the spare room.

Paul: No way, Splitsy. I'm not letting another of your freeloading hoodlums upset the cosmic harmony of the house.

Tony: S'alright, he won't be no fuss. (Calling.) In here, mate.

(Shane Ritchie enters the living room. There is thunderous applause from the audience.)

Shane: Hello. Thanks for putting me up. Before I settle in, can your whites pass the Daz Doorstep Challenge?

Paul: Gasp!

Tony: Through there, Shane mate. Just dump your bags on that table for now. (There is a series of small smashing sounds.)

Paul: Scream!

(Suddenly the vicar walks in.)

Vicar: Dearie me, Paul. You know what that means - no china doll collection, no entry into heaven for you. Bye.

Shane: Whoops! Sorry about that Paul. Never mind, here are some comfortably-priced computer games to help cheer you up. *Grease* is the word, is the word, is the word...

Tony: Hurrah! Shane Ritchie saves the day! Paul, put down that baseball bat...

NHL Hockey

The great thing about reviewing budget games is that the job comes with a certain amount of 'nostalgia' built in. *NHL Hockey* takes me right back to the days when the Sega Mega Drive was churning out top-quality sport sims like there was no tomorrow, and *NHL* was just one of many. As a game its only real failure is that hockey isn't particularly popular outside of Canada, but apart from that it plays like a dream date with a nymphomaniac - even if it is looking a bit long in the tooth.

SCORE 0000

PRICE £11.99

Day Of The Tentacle

Just a quick update on *DOTT*, as I think it deserves more coverage than the single line of last month. LucasArts certainly knows how to put together an enjoyable adventure, and even if you tend to think that it hasn't offered anything challenging since *Indy and The Last Crusade*, you have to agree that most LucasArts' games are immense fun -

and any game that comes with a free copy of *Maniac Mansion* built into it deserves plaudits in my book.

SCORE 0000

PRICE £12.99

Dune II

Before *Command & Conkers* there was the Westwood interpretation of the classic sci-fi series. It's obvious to see where *C & C*'s roots lie, as the two games are very similar to play (although *Dune II* lacks some of the latter's refinements and gloss), meaning that *Dune II* is mucho fun, mucho challenging and mucho worth buying at a budget price. If you want a more detailed review you should read Dunc's *C & C* love-fest in issue 28, replacing the words 'Dune', 'Kyle MacLachlan', 'spice' and 'over-long series of novels' where appropriate.

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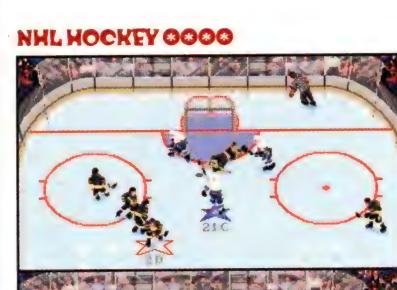
Car & Driver

Car & Driver is one of the few games to be released which doesn't present any kind of challenge to the player. Let's face it, the fact that you can drive around a parking lot is one of the game's key features. But to be fair, *Car & Driver* offers a nice selection of cars to mess around with, and a few of the tracks prove interesting (pretend that you're Burt Reynolds in your very own *Cannonball Run!*), but it just doesn't have enough in the way of actual gameplay to warrant any special attention.

SCORE 00

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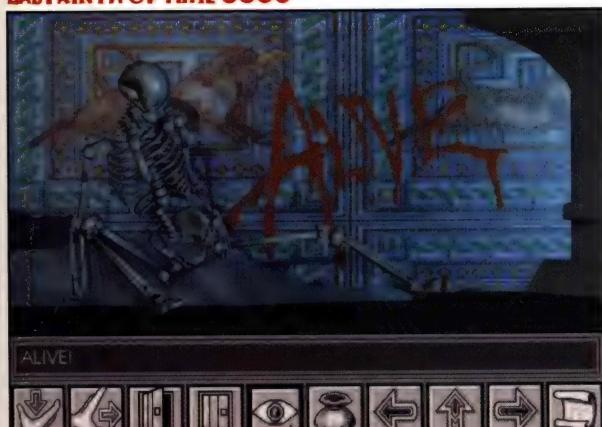
NHL Hockey



Dune II



LABYRINTH OF TIME 0000





BBRG GRIN



SPACE HULK **00000**

TFX

Another re-release and the forerunner to *EF2000*. Relive those nightmare days when everyone was called Lizard, you had to wait five seconds between view changes and the auto pilot would stop you from flying into the ground even if you wanted to. Naah, who am I kidding? *TFX* was first-rate flight simming all the way, with enough action, excitement and graphics to make a trappist monk stand up and shout, "Hey Momma!" Of course, if you already have *EF2000* then there isn't much point in taking a step backwards, but for the rest of us...

SCORE **0000**

PRICE £12.99

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

While the debate as to the worth of *A Final Unity* goes on in the cybervillage known as CIX, a meatier argument is whether the original *Trek* game was up to standard. It captured the spirit and style of the '60s TV show, but from an adventuring point of view it lacked challenge. Still, at least it's cheap now.

SCORE **000**

PRICE £12.99

DAY OF THE TENTACLE **0000**



Labyrinth Of Time

I've made the odd dodgy decision or two in my time: praising *Rebel Assault*; going nuts over *Breach 2*; enjoying *Fletch*. But the one I've received the most stick for lately has been for recommending *Labyrinth Of Time*, EA's visually alluring adventure tale. Most 'other' magazines seemed to be of the opinion that it was slow, boring and hard to get on with. Personally, I found that the fact it wasn't high-energy cartoon mayhem, that it told a story that was intelligent and engaging, had a look that was unique and puzzles that were actually tough and challenging actually worked in its favour. Silly me, what was I thinking? (Sarcasm Mode=Off.)

SCORE **0000**

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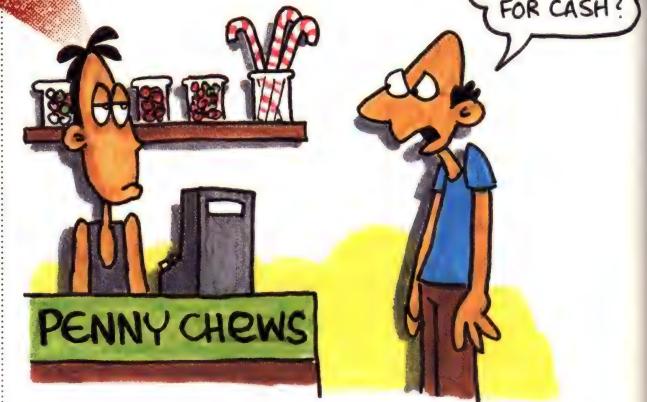
Space Hulk

Why is it that whenever you mention the excellent computer version of *Space Hulk*, people say things like, "Yeah, great, excellent, cool," but when you mention the table-top board game from Games Workshop, people say, "Sad, pathetic, loser, no-life"? The message, therefore, would seem to be that if you want to simulate life as a futuristic space marine you should stick to the computer screen. Electronic Arts has put together one of the more gripping releases of late here, combining strategic gameplay with classic presentation. If you missed it first time round, DON'T miss it now.

SCORE **00000**

PRICE £11.99

STAR TREK **000**



Paul Presley was sentenced to serve a total of 30 years' hard labour for the wilful damage and assault of our nation's top light entertainment and West End musical star. However, the ruling was eventually overturned by the high courts after the defence counsel successfully argued that there were in fact mitigating circumstances – it was Shane Ritchie, after all.

Tony Split sold nearly every single one of Paul's belongings to pay for his substantial legal fees. *Space Hulk* and *TFX* were both of a sufficient quality to cover the actual costs, the rest of the money was used to fund Tony's recent holiday to the Bahamas.

Even after spending a considerable amount of time in hospital receiving the very best medical attention possible, Shane Ritchie never fully recovered from the crippling injuries inflicted upon him and he never performed in public again. It's worth noting that in certain South American countries

Paul Presley is now a god. **Z**



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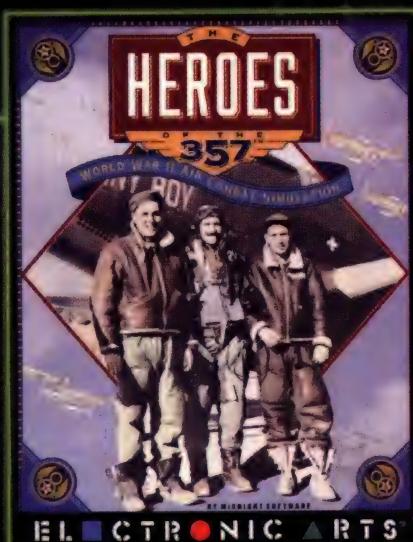


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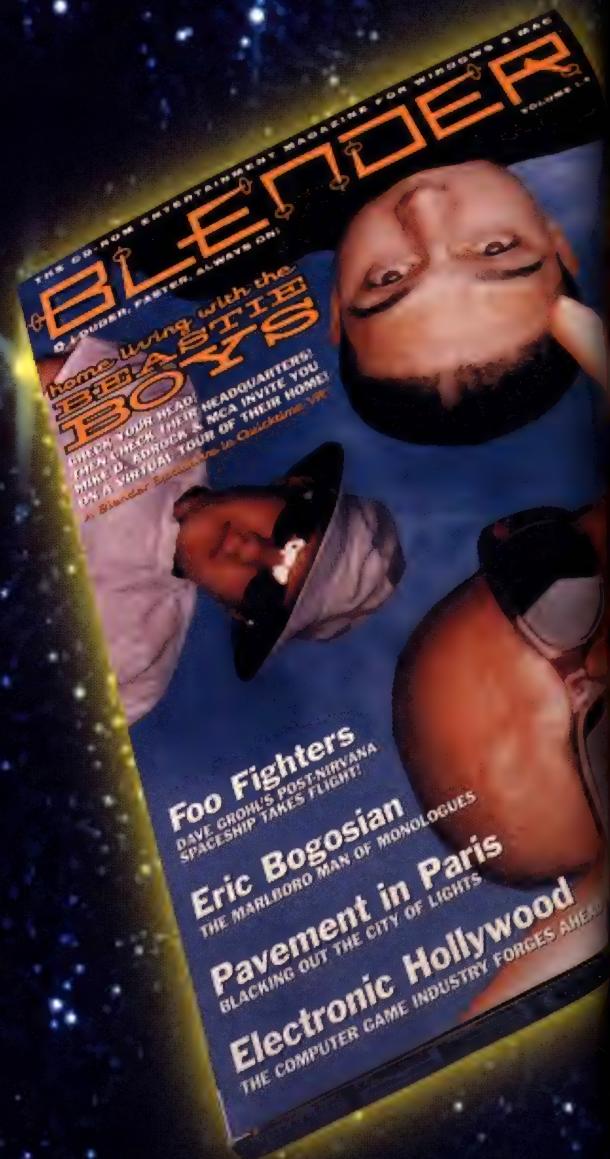
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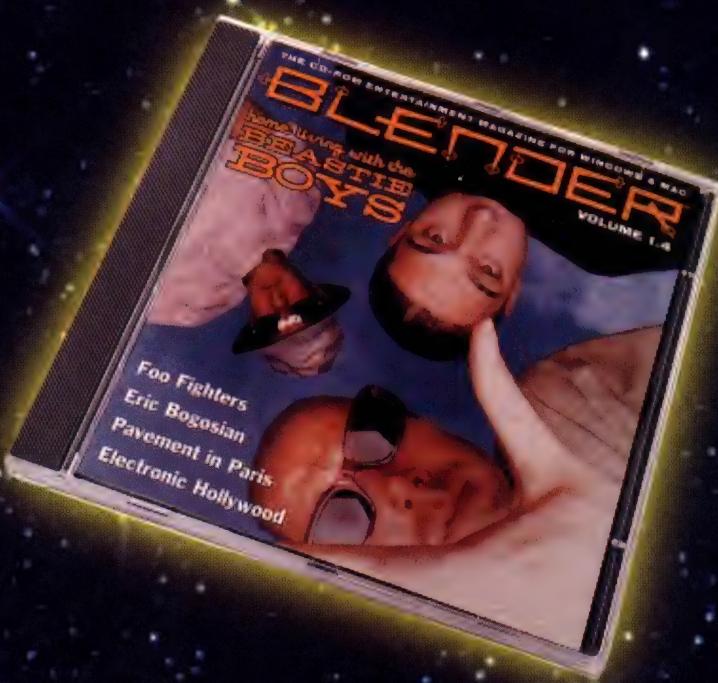
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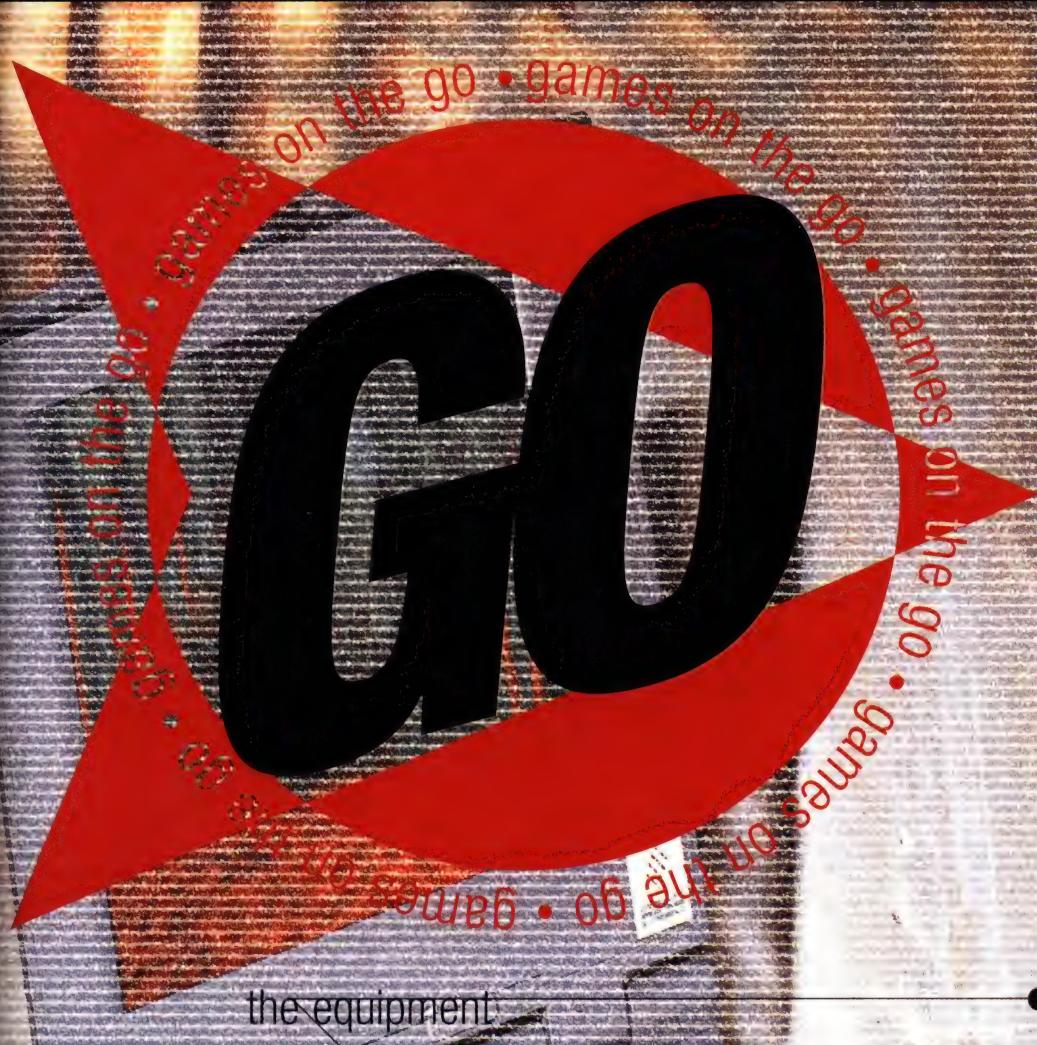
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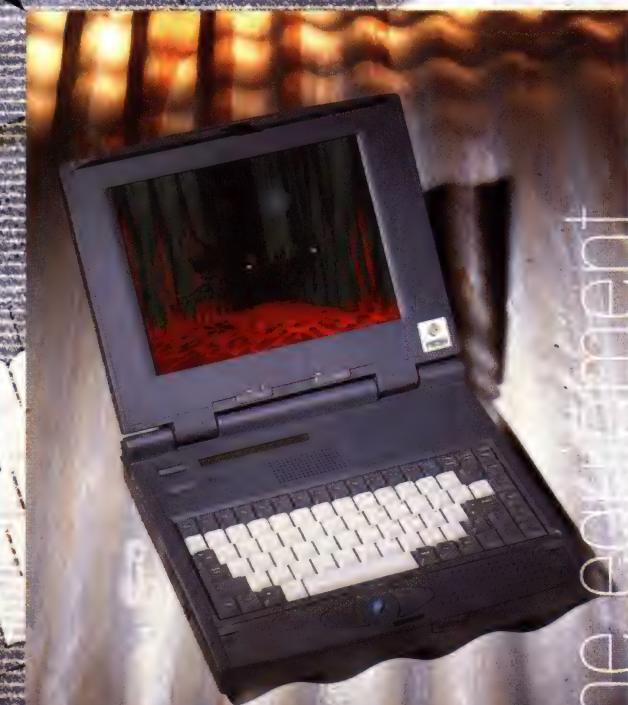
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the equipment



Games in your lap is one thing, but games on your laptop is something entirely different. Paul Presley misheard us and (snigger) unwittingly volunteered to see what gamesplaying is like out in the real world. Just imagine *The Travel Show* for social inadequates and you'll get the idea.

WHAT'S COLD, BLEAK, MISERABLE and heavily polluted? It must be the new Autumn season on ITV! No, actually it's the outside world and the subject of this month's feature-length experiment into the art of playing computer games. Parents just love to nag you endlessly about spending too much time indoors hunched in front of the screen, so here's the perfect opportunity to keep them happy while you indulge in all your usual digital pastimes. But what's gamesplaying away from the bedroom like? Is it worth it? How much will it cost? Let's deal with that one first.

The equipment

The great thing about laptop PCs is that these days everything you need to play a top-name title is fully built in: CD-ROM drives, sound cards, modem ports and speeds that would put Tony Slattery's TV appearance signing pen to shame. Gone are the days of luggage wallahs carrying mountains of tangled wires and extraneous boxes while you walk on ahead - in these modern times the whole lot can fit into your backpack, and there's still room for your lunch. There's only one necessary external peripheral, and that's a portable phone with modem capabilities.

The set-up we decided on consisted of a Nokia Orange handset connected to a rather nice Mesh 486 Laptop, with a MicroLink portable modem thrown in for good measure. But the bad news is that none of this comes cheap - this little lot may be just what you've always wanted but it's also costly. Our pile of kit came to almost £3500, and that didn't include the dubious services of Honest Ron's Bodyguard & Security Personnel, who we employed to make sure that the only grubby fingers coming into contact with the equipment were ours.

But 'walk tall and carry a large stick' has always been our motto so, armed to the teeth with top of the range gear, a selection of top games, a list of suitable gamesplaying locations and a camera crew to record our progress for your visual delight, it's time to hit the streets. As Tarantino put it, let's go to work.

« On the toilet

Well okay, we'll start off with the loo as our first location. Anyway, as mums are fond of saying, it's always best to spend a penny before you start any journey as the chance may not arise again.

Anyway, enough parental advice and on to the most notable aspect of my toiletry trials – the sound quality. The acoustics are so wonderful I now know why opera singers like to practice in the bathroom. I mean, who really needs such extravagance as surround sound speakers when the incredibly close proximity of the walls means that the sound bounces all around you? Fighting to the death with cacodemons in *Doom* was never more, ahem, appropriate.

The atmosphere 'in the John' (as our American cousins would have it) is so serene it allows you to become totally absorbed in whatever you're playing. Be warned though, the only drawback of extended periods of *Ascendancy* is that it tends to leave one of those irritating grooves around the buttocks. Plus the 'Embarrassment Factor' is fairly high if it's a public loo – people giggling in the next cubicle (*Sorry, but some of the noises you were making – Ed.*) and strange wires dangling under the bottom of the door might lead to someone calling either the police or Gilbert and George.

Oh yes, one last thing. I've finally found a use for all those game manuals. I'll let you guess what it was.

Take the tube

People react very oddly to gamesplaying on public transport. Women look at you as if to say, "You'll never see me naked", kids laugh out loud at you unless you can show superhuman displays of skill, and teenagers with *Oasis* T-shirts and '60s hairstyles keep calling you sad.

Still, there are three important things you should note while subterranean. Firstly, don't start yelling, "Shit! What's that down that tunnel?" while playing *Descent* or you'll be assaulted by elderly ladies with umbrellas. Secondly, unless you've got one of those magic mobile phones that they use all the time on *The X-Files* (which allow Mulder to make calls from just about anywhere in the known world), you're gonna get squat in the way of reception, so unfortunately modem gaming is a double negative.

Thirdly – and this is the biggie – take someone large with you. The Tube is a terrible place, littered with villains, hoodlums and naughty types. Unless you've protection you can kiss goodbye to the sexy-looking hardware you took out a second mortgage for.

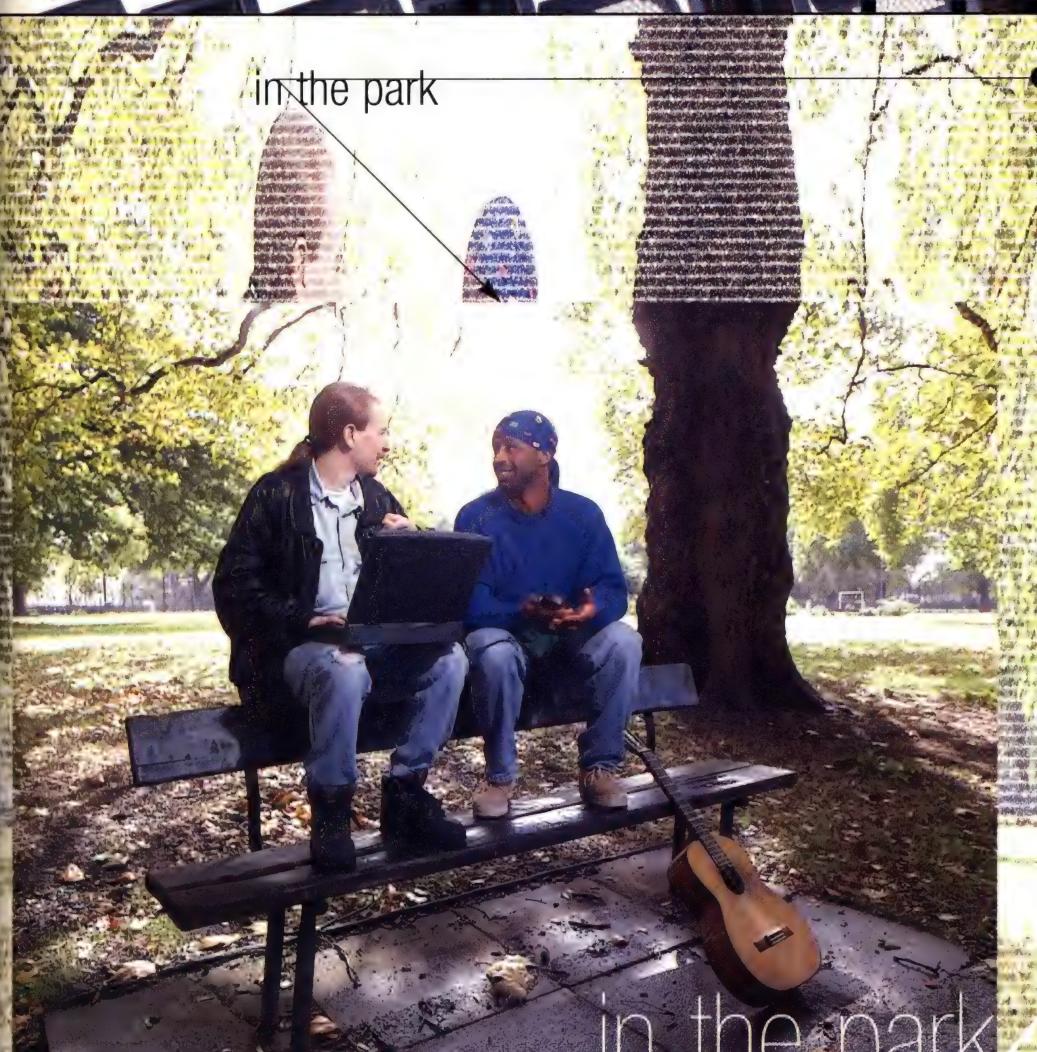
Apart from that, it's quite good fun on the Underground (and it's not often you get to say that, is it?). Obviously *Ultima Underworld*-style games are the most atmospheric, but trying to outdo London Transport with the subway systems on *Sim City 2000* is quite a laugh too – especially if yours actually work.

on the toilet

on the toilet



in the park



in the park

If the elements are on your side then this is what playing outdoors is really all about. Find a park bench or a handy tree stump, give the tramp 50 pence to move on, sprinkle the place with a decent amount of disinfectant and sit ye down for a relaxing, tranquil, back-to-nature kind of gig – football, tennis and golf sims are especially pleasurable. If you can put up with those gits on roller blades careening by every five minutes, you'll be hard pushed to beat the atmosphere found playing in the park.

But there's also a hidden advantage to playing games outdoors – the one tip I'd thoroughly recommend is to have a word processor loaded as well. It's not as stupid as it sounds; if an attractive female walks by you can pretend to be writing poetry – they dig all of that bohemian, artistic stuff (apparently).

The fusion of nature and technology is big in Japan at the moment and now I understand why. It's healthy and mind-expanding at the same time, although playing in sparsely populated areas does tend to get the old paranoia levels racing every time you hear a twig snap.

Of course, if it starts to rain you're buggered, unless you happen to have a large golfing umbrella, which is when playing *Scottish Open Golf* becomes eerily realistic. Especially if the tramp has wandered back and is waving his can of Special Brew in your face and swearing at you in a Glaswegian accent.

On a plane

It's every flight sim addict's dream to be on a plane full of passengers which suddenly finds itself with both pilots out of action; what else would such an aficionado do in response to the magic question of "Does anyone have any flight experience?" other than rush heroically to the cockpit in a frenzy with images of *Falcon 3.0* buzzing in his mind? However, the reality of flight is a very different affair.

First of all, airlines don't like people carrying laptops. Apparently playing *Solitaire For Windows* affects the landing gear or some such, so you can only turn it on mid-flight – and don't even think about trying to network. Aside from the ever-changing reception problems, no sooner do you get your mobile phone out than the stewardesses start moving in on your seat with wagging fingers. You won't be getting that extra bag of peanuts, that's for sure.

On the plus side, a good meaty game of *Tornado* can really make the hours on a long journey, ahem, fly by (sorry); the level of concentration you can achieve is amazing when, apart from reading the in-flight magazine, there's absolutely nothing to do (the hypnotic noise of the engines might also have something to do with that though, providing your attempts to get *Magic Carpet* working don't inadvertently cause them to stall). ▶





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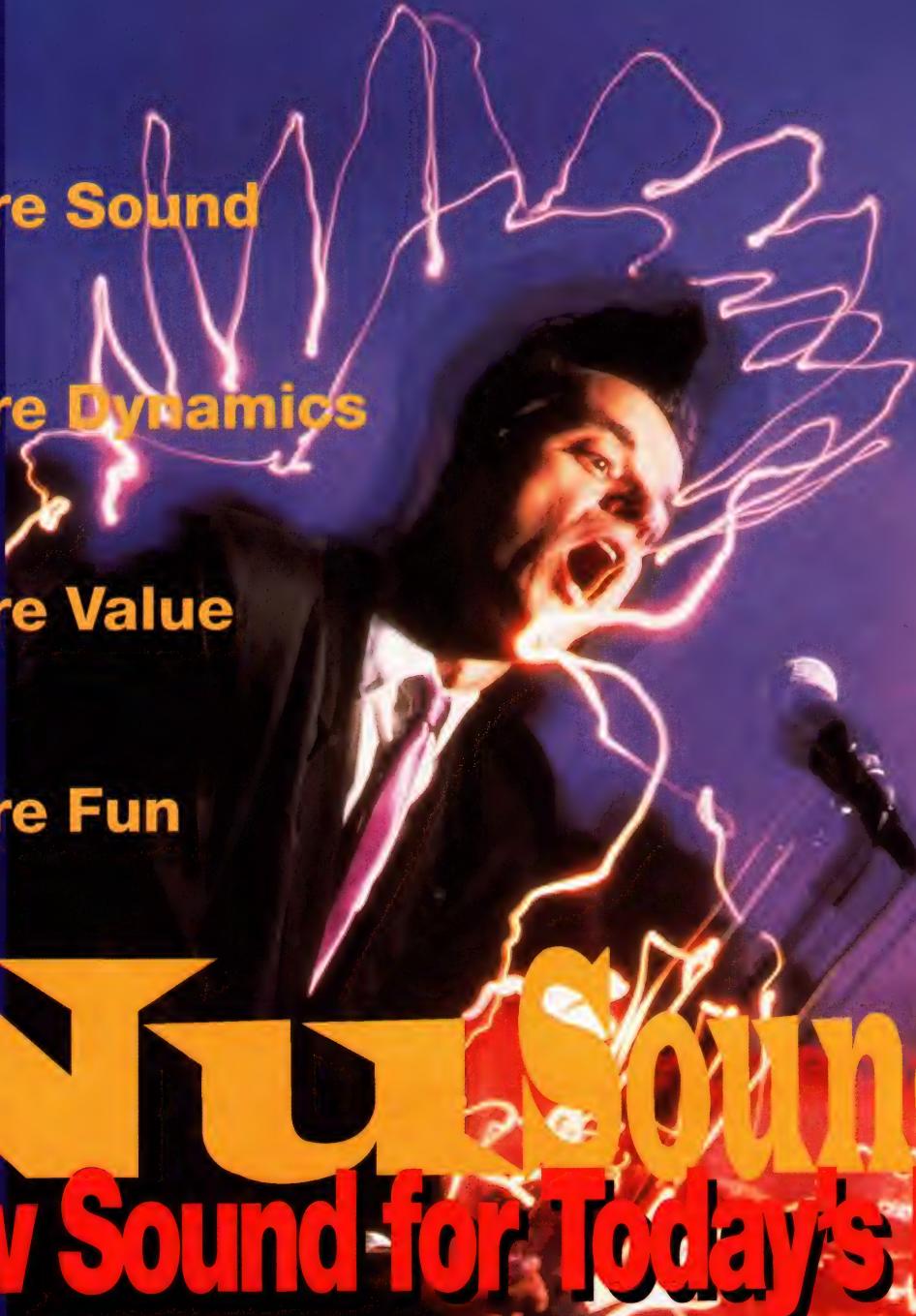
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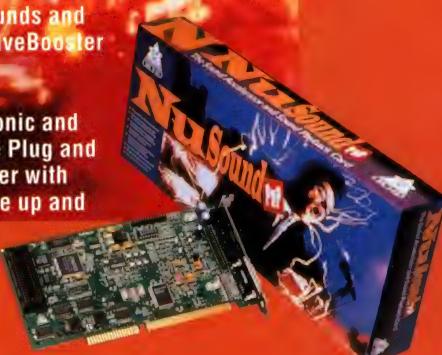
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ORCHID

in the café



In the café

Time for a spot of lunch! By taking your portable palace of pleasure into any respectable eatery, it's soon transformed into your very own Cybercafé. Just to stick it to the Cyberia mob I decided to jack into the matrix from here, and surprisingly easy it was too. After a quick check of my e-mail (nothing apart from the *Electronic Reader's Digest*, as usual) and a quick scout around the home pages of a couple of friends or mine (sad, so very, very sad), I decided to see about a modem game of *Doom*.

The problem here is one of hygiene, though not my own, you understand. My standards are perfectly adequate, but the kind of greasy spoons I eat in would never survive a visit by a health inspector. But no, I don't mean that either - what I'm on about is the hygiene of your computer.

Let me give you an example of what happened. No sooner had I begun to get hammered, chainsawed and BFG-ed than - yikes! - my waitress spilt coffee all over the screen. Worse still, my bacon, egg and sausage sandwich dripped onto the keyboard. Despite profuse apologies and an unlimited supply of clean-up tissues, I can only come to the conclusion that noshing greasy fare is one thing you cannot do while gaming. Heaven only knows how Cyberia manages to stay so clean. (Bibs? - Ed.)

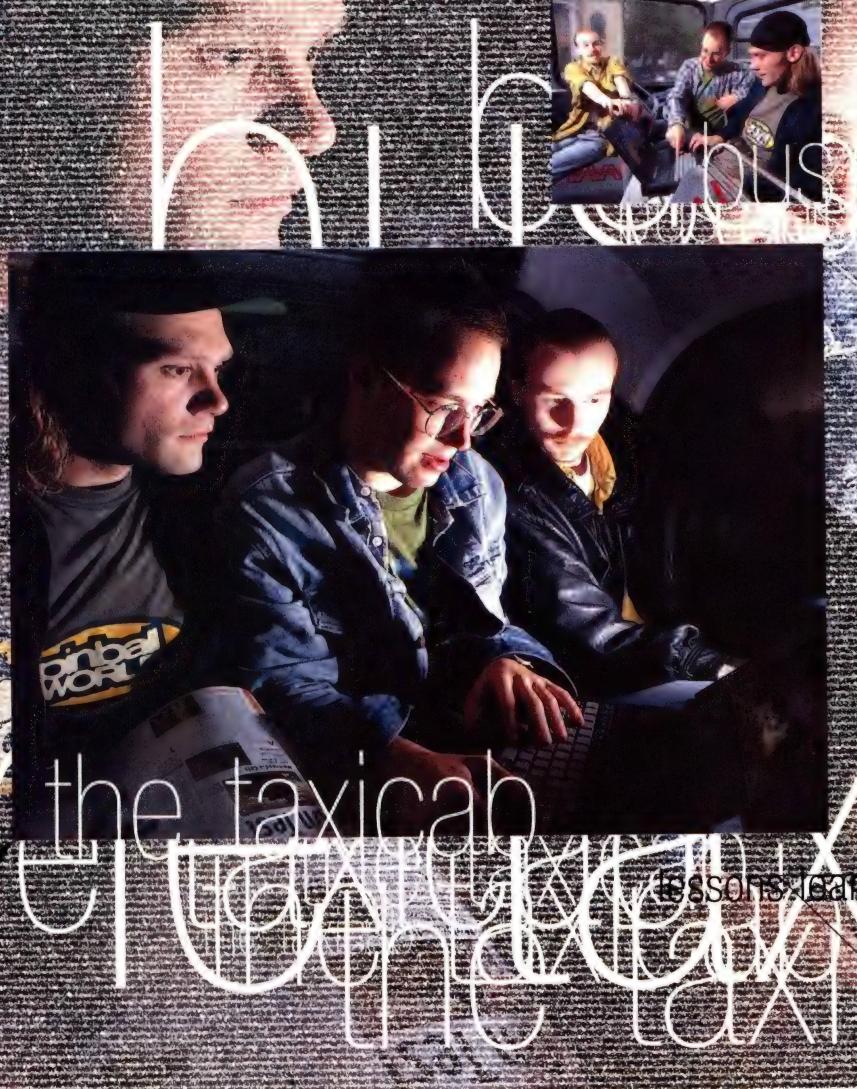
Trafalgar Square

Out of the café and into the middle of the fair city of London. What better landmark to visit than that pillar of society, that real high-flier, the man who towers over everyone (*That's enough* - Ed.)... yup, Lord Admiral Nelson and his Column. Well, nothing had prepared me for this. You know those scenes in American films, where a kid is playing an arcade game and a large crowd gathers behind him? Well, our photo's a bit misleading, but it was just like that.

The great thing about Americans is that they're more than willing to cheer and holler for any old rubbish and Trafalgar Square, being such a popular tourist attraction, is full of them. Barely five minutes after shooing away the pigeons, sitting down, beating away more of them, setting up, trying to get rid of yet more of the feathered pests and starting a game of *FX Fighters*, a crowd had started to form behind me. People were even cheering my name (actually, because they didn't know my name they were cheering for someone called Bob, but who was I to argue?).

Well, the atmosphere here beat practically every other location so far, and by the time I'd finished I felt like some kind of national hero. Whatever tribulations I'd put up with before, this made it all seem worthwhile. Even the pigeons seemed impressed. If this isn't what outdoor gaming is all about then... well, my name isn't Bob.





The taxicab

"You play on them computers then? My nephew's got a computer. One of those, oh what's it bloody called? Commodore something or other. He likes playing games, yeah. What do you recommend? Don't understand 'em meself."

I opted for the luxury of a taxi on the way home (it's all on expenses after all). While weaving through the streets it came to me - what better time than now for a game of *Fatal Racing*? Well, apparently any time would have been more appropriate as my driver didn't seem too thrilled by my constant cries of, "Go left, go left! No, smash into the back of him. Yeah, cut 'im up! Oh, can't this stupid thing go any faster?" Only asking his thoughts on the Tory party seemed to calm him enough to continue the journey.

But the problem here is that it's hard to get comfortable when you're being thrown from side to side every time you round a corner, plus being interrupted by Mr Cabbie's inane chat. But on the positive side, any cab driver will always take the longest route possible, so at least you get the chance to have a meaty strategy session (but this is only a good idea if someone else is paying the fare).

And so to bed...

The day draws to an end. A mug of cocoa, a hot water bottle, a suitable companion and time for bed. But wait - who says bedtime is dull? Why not see what twilight gaming is all about? As tempting as it was to load up a cheap shareware poker game to challenge my partner to, instead I decided to sample *Voyeur* to see if some interactive erotica would bring us closer together. (*Hands up all those who think this is going to end on an Alone In The Dark joke - Ed.*)

Multi-player fun (er, apart from the obvious) is out, as the only people still about at that time of night are Macca on some *Doom BBS* or another and Americans, and frankly neither are too appealing that late in the day. Mind you, the atmosphere is just right for a deep and thoughtful adventure game; it's sort of equivalent to reading in bed, but it's interactive reading in bed.

Something like either *The Labyrinth Of Time* or *Myth* is absolutely perfect for inducing a mysterious dream-like state (along with the cocoa), and providing your laptop has an automatic switch-off function you'll be okay. But just one word of warning - don't play *Alien Breed* or you'll never get to sleep.

Lessons learnt

So what have we learnt about mobile gaming? Firstly, the fewer wires you have to deal with, the better. Secondly, as the atmosphere varies with each location, pick your games wisely and you'll be in for a hell of a time. Finally, if you want to play over a modem, try to find a fixed spot with plenty of open air. There's nothing more annoying than getting within one frag of beating Macca only to pass in front of a large building and to lose the carrier (why I'm still trying to beat him is a mystery in itself. Perhaps I'm a masochist?).

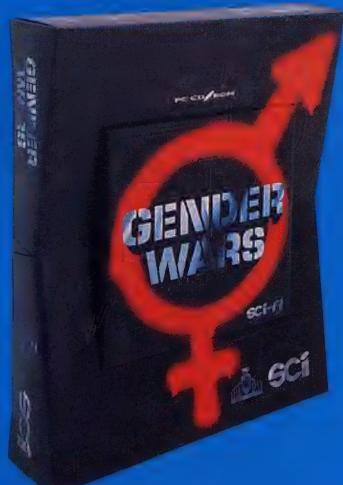
Take all that into account and you're laughing all the way to the happy bank - it's fun playing outdoors. As we've already mentioned, some locations are obviously better than others, but there's a certain something about getting out into the open while maintaining your grip on social unacceptability. It's one step closer to the cyberpunk world of total computer mobility, and with technology pressing ahead at the speed it is, it won't be very long before all the equipment you need will fit snugly in your pocket, on your wrist and on your sunglasses. PCs designed by Georgio Armani, now there's a thought. **Z**

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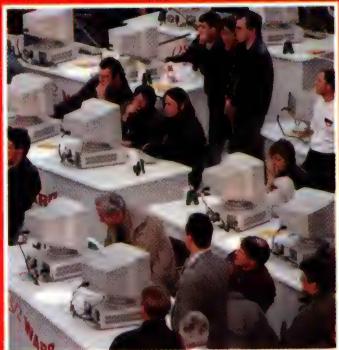
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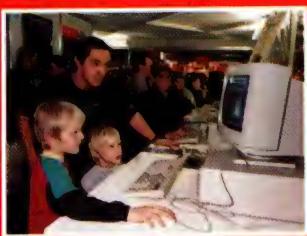


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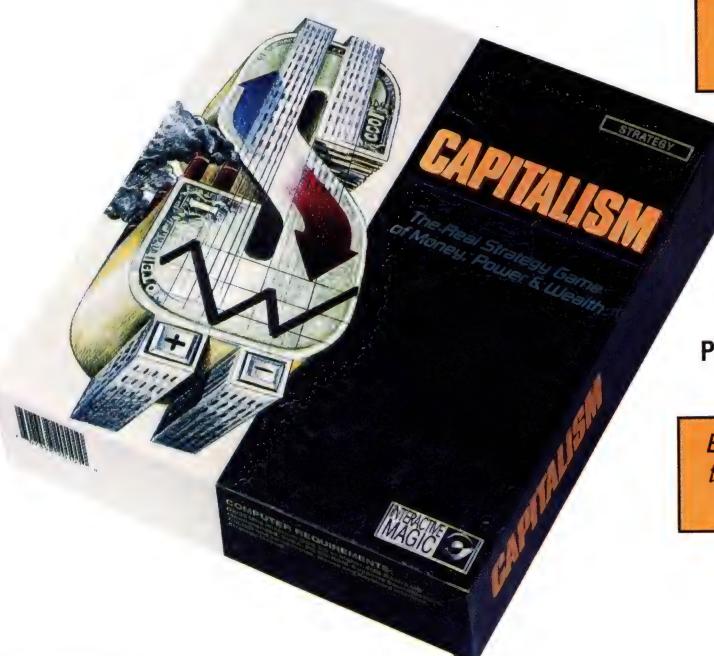
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Win a Forte VFX-1 VR Helmet

Last month we brought you a review of the finished Forte VFX-1 VR helmet, and jolly good it turned out to be too. This month, we give the bugger away.

If you want to get your hands on one of these rather desirable and, let's face it, bloody expensive goodies, all you have to do is answer the questions on the form below. A dead easy competition, or what?

The helmet comes complete with a demo disc of software and the rather fabby Cyberpuck which is a groovesome 3D joystick doofer that you wave around in order to look as stupid as humanly possible while immersing yourself in 3D game-land. The whole luscious caboodle is worth around £600 and it isn't even in the shops yet!

The helmet has now been snapped up by a distributor who will be responsible for selling the unit in the UK and if you're really desperate to find out more about it you can call Fifth Dimension Technologies on 0181-974 2044. Z



Question One

VR stands for what exactly?

- Very Rich
- Virtual Reality
- Voluptuous Redhead

Question Two

The thing you wave around that comes with the VFX-1 is called:

- The Virtual Joystick
- The Cybermouse
- The Cyberpuck

Question Three

The distributor for the VFX-1 is called:

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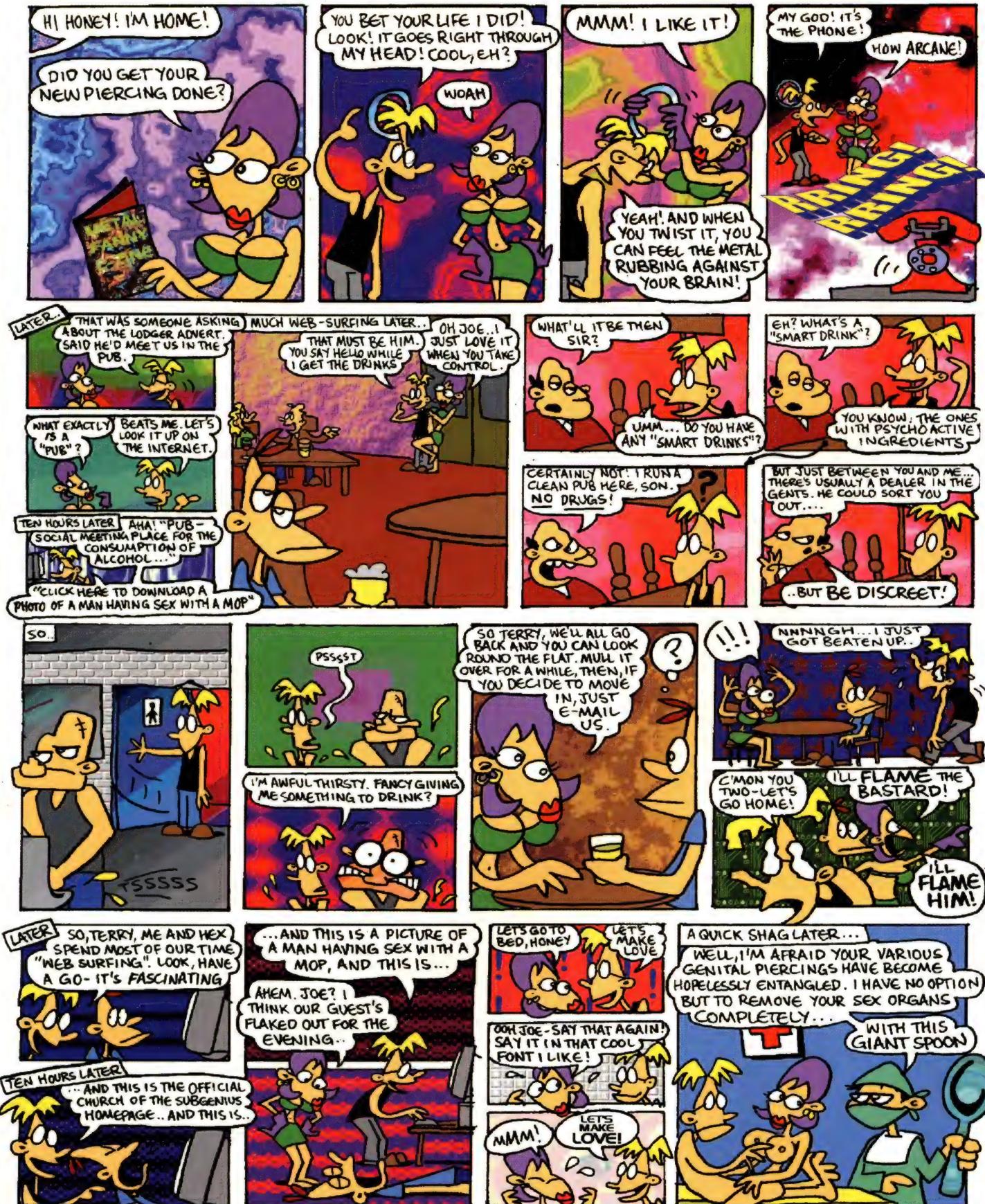
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The CYBER TWATS

BY CHARLIE BROOKER



This month CIX gets Internet, CompuServe gets cheap (no, really), the FragMeister joins the British Doom League, and the ultimate games machine gets sorted (once and for all). Yes, really.

ZONE

ON

LINE

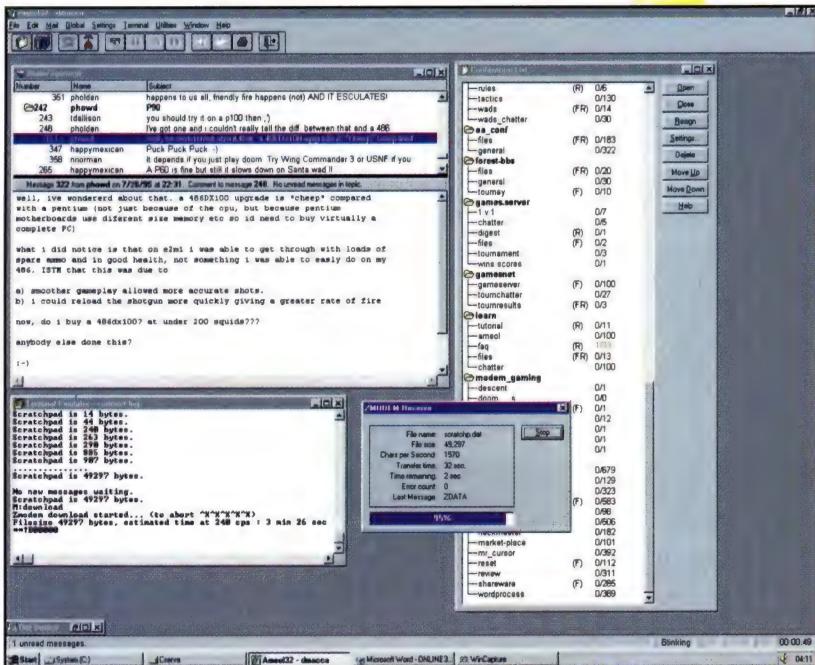


APOLOGIES, APOLOGIES, APOLOGIES. YES, WE COME TO YOU most humbly on our virtual knees, praying for cyber forgiveness. No, really. Last month we had an almighty cock-up and basically all the stuff featured in Update Watch, Cool Files, and DoomWatch did not appear on the PC Zone cover-mounted CD. Sorry. You'll find them this month in appropriate sub directories of the **ONLINE** directory. Sorry. Oh, and the feature we promised called 'ISDN UberFrag Kills The Americans And That' will not appear (Seattle beckons and I must go, you see). Sorry. And er, nor will the 'Reader's Files' section we promised, which has had to vamoose due to testing difficulties. Sorry. Next month, however, we'll be full steam ahead with all the promised bits. And then some.

CIX INTERNET CONNECTION

The massively lovely cix has finally announced its full Internet connection service. If you took heed of the special cheapo cix registration offer in On-Line two months ago, you'll now be able to access the World Wide Web, Gopher, FTP sites, and some other incomprehensible things at baud rates up to 28.8k. Of course, such a service comes at a price. Firstly, you'll have to shell out for the software front-end (£30), and then a one-off set-up fee (£10), and then monthly minimum instalments of £15. If you go over your allotted time par mois you'll be paying normal cix connection rates (4p per minute cheap rate, 6p per minute peak). But to supplement the service, cix is spreading its connection nodes around the country so non-London users

(Below) It's been a well kept secret ('til now, of course) that Macca has conditioned himself to be able to remain at a keyboard for 48 hours at a time without the need for sleep, loo breaks or refreshments. Don't try this at home, kids.



can access with a local phone call. Well-known villages such as Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham and Carlisle will gain nodes, as well as lesser known hamlets such as Pontypridd, Bourton-Water, Rangeworthy, and Monmouth.

One of the coolest things about the new service is the user-definable domain names, previously only provided by Demon Internet. So, basically, instead of your e-mail address reading something like dmacca@cix.compulink.co.uk, you can change it to dmacca@excellent.compulink.co.uk or something like dmacca@goodinbed and other sundry infantile names. The problem is that the bloody Americans have already snaffled up a lot of the cooler domain names (klingon, artichoke, and DoomGod) and lots of corporations are copyrighting their names (as the journalist who set his e-mail address as ronald@macdonald.com found out).

For more information, either e-mail sales@compulink.co.uk, or phone cix on 0181-296 9666.

COMPUSERVE=CHEAP

No, really. The gigantic CompuServe Corp, which has nigh-on the biggest bulletin board system in the world, operating, as it does, ten trillion megaservers (ono) somewhere in Texas or something, has introduced a new pricing plan, Internet/Web access, and, ballyhoo for us, a UK section. We'll be exploring their new 'net' stuff and UK 'Gee I Love Your Accent' forums in a later issue. Right now, however, we'll just do a quick synopsis of their new prices.

cis membership now costs \$9.95 (£5.62) a month. This gives you five hours' access to all services (forums, celebrity conferences, mail, internet, on-line magazines, and the God Bless America forum). Go beyond the five hour mark, and you'll start paying \$2.95 (£1.67) per hour, instead of the old rate of \$4.80 (£2.71) an hour. That works out as 5 cents or 3p per minute, instead of 8 cents or 5p. Addictive users who just can't let WinCIM go can opt to join the Super Value Club. For this you pay \$24.95 (£14.10) a month for 20 hours' access, and then a mere \$1.95 (£1.10) an hour or 2p per minute.

Sounds quite reasonable. No, really. CompuServe UK has also ramped up its connection modems, and right now, as we er, speak, you should be able to connect to cis at a whopping great 28.8k baud. For no extra change. That's nice.

No, really.

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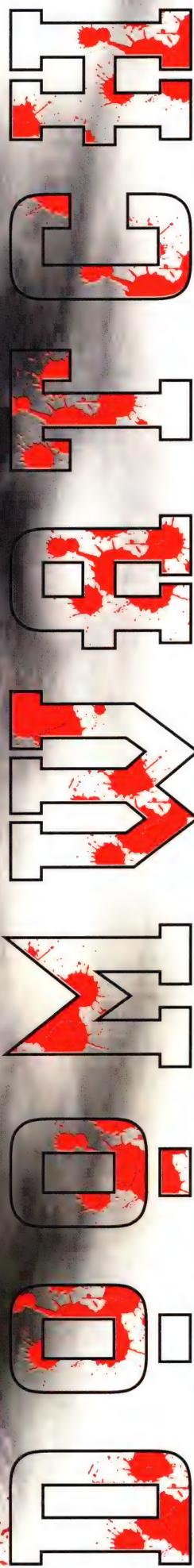
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This month, the one and only **UberFragMeister** explores **Pathological Doom Disorder**, plays with a new version of **Sirdoom**, and no frags in Seattle.

NEW SIRDOOM

Yes, the program which is the portal to endless frags, blood fests, and splatty bits has been upgraded. At last. For users of the various *Doom* bulletin boards, popping up like virtual spring flowers all around the country, *SIRDOOM v2.35* is there for you to use (on this month's CD-ROM in **ONLINE/SIRDOOM**). This version has improved documentation which no longer treads a thin line between Joanna Lumley's modem knowledge and Bill Gates' brain, and now, at last, has a built-in set of initialisation strings for popular modems (mainly popular American modems, but we're getting there). In addition to that, you can now play *Doom*, *Doom II*, and *Heretic* without swapping programs, and the program features a cool new TIDCUP feature. TIDCUP (which, incidentally, we do not understand at all) affects the packets sent by *Doom* during a multi-player game. By raising or lowering it, you can speed up the game to compensate for old-fashioned dx and dx2/66 users or people with cranky 9600-only modems. Also gone now is 'Moderator Syndrome' whereby the host of a game suffers jerks and choppy play. It's smooth as God now, and a damn sight more benign.

If you're toying with the idea of playing multi-player *Doom* over your phone line, are a bit perplexed by the boring prose on this page, or just want to hop on the bandwagon, then **SIRDOOM** is the program you need. We've impregnated our copy with all the numbers of the current *Doom* BBS's in the country. So, load it up and dial away.

DOOM RUINS LIVES

It's quite amazing what *Doom* can do to some people. While most players are content to suck on £200-£500 phone bills in pursuit of *Doom* thrills, for others (present company excluded) *Doom* has gone way beyond a simple hobby or interest - it's become a way of life. For some, the 'D' word has become their entire existence and operates them like a puppet. Take Steve, for example, who calls himself Maddog (we smile at the irony). Steve, not content with the delights of just playing *Doom*, took it upon himself to go one better. How? By gathering all his CompuServe (bluergh) friends together in a self-styled British *Doom* League. He fabricated the rules, the divisions, and the fixtures. And they did play the league. And they did see that it was good. And they were enthused.

But Steve's obsessive compulsive disorder pushed him still further. He realised that a league isn't a true league unless the players can banter and slag each other off in some way - the more references to the sexual habits of each player's mother the better. The realisation led him to set up his own



Do you have what it takes to beat the best? Having beaten the UK's best, do you want to be flown over to Microsoft's headquarters in Seattle to challenge the World's national champions at the world launch of Hexen? We thought you might.

To enter just buy the November issue of PC Zone, on sale in this store, fill in the coupon on page 11 and hand it in at the counter by Friday 13th October. But hurry - places are limited.

PC ZONE

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GT

PC ZONE

Regional heats will take place in the following stores over the weekend of 14th and 15th October 1995:

- Birmingham Saturday 14th October
- Cardiff Saturday 14th October
- Edinburgh Saturday 14th October
- Glasgow Saturday 14th October
- Leeds Saturday 14th October
- Liverpool Saturday 14th October
- London Saturday 14th October
- Nottingham Saturday 14th October
- Sheffield Saturday 14th October
- Cardiff Sunday 15th October
- Edinburgh Sunday 15th October
- London Sunday 15th October

The final will be held at HMV Level One in Oxford Street, London on Sunday 22nd October. See the November issue of PC Zone for more details.

BBS, gluing together various high speed modem things, some shareware, and metric tonnes of Ascii art. Now the players had a place to download files, exchange insults and post their fixtures. Steve was satisfied, but...

It wasn't enough. His OCD shoved him further still into the depths of what a person with a beard would call Pathological Doom Disorder, whereby the afflicted can find solace and true self-realisation only by wrapping themselves foetal-like in every facet of the game. So, Steve went about constructing the WADS upon which all the games of the British Doom League would be played. He didn't just design some new architecture. Oh no. He designed new graphics, new sounds, new music and - lord have mercy on his soul - new monsters. He even changed the *Doom* title screen and substituted his own



rendered 3D *Doom* logo. It didn't look that great, but aesthetics are irrelevant with this kind of compulsion. And finally, as any *Doom* head must do, he contacted the UberFragMeister, praying that he would give his blessing (and, let's face it, outrageously unobjective promotion) to the league, its players, its WADS, and its rules. The UberFrag was initiated into the league with insults and slag-offs echoing from the other players (Macca-spacker was as funny as it got). He was placed in Division Two (yes, two), where he lies now, panting sadly over a red hot modem twice a week, playing his fixtures.

If you want more help, information, or just like-minded therapy from The British Doom League, try contacting Steve at: steve@maddog1.demon.co.uk.

FRAGLESS IN SEATTLE

At the time of writing, that holiest of triumvirates - PC Zone, GT Interactive, and HMV - is gearing up for the splendid UK heats of Deathmatch '95, the iD/Microsoft World Deathmatch tournament. Press deadlines, unfortunately, mean we won't be able to cover the tourney this month, but worry not and rest assured Doomers and dabblers, next month will carry a veritably huge *DoomWatch* Special reporting on all the trials and tribulations of the UK battle, and the blood, sweat, and tears of the final in Seattle. It will be, as they say, kewl.



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the *Ultimate* Doom machine

“MUCH ANIMATED DISCUSSION HAS BEEN BATTED BACKWARDS and forwards across the murky Atlantic about what constitutes the ‘Ultimate Doom Machine’ – in other words, which specification of machine is the fastest for playing *Doom*. Earlier this year, some bright spark discovered the DoomBench system which is built into the game’s code. By running *Doom* or *Doom 2* with this command line:

DOOM -nosound -timedemo demo2

the game plays demo number 2 without dropping frames and then quits to dos (note: don’t press any keys) with two figures: x gametics, and y realities.

By dividing x by y and multiplying by 35, you receive an exact frames per second rating for your machine.

On CompuServe recently an enterprising chap called Jeff Rollason (American, unfortunately) asked everyone he knew to perform the test on their machine. The 87 results he compiled produce the clearest picture ever of what processor, graphics card, bus type, RAM type, and cache type work best for *Doom*.

AVERAGE RESULTS

If you’ve got a machine at home, the following table shows the kind of results you should expect from a well-designed, well-made, well-specified machine.

Best	Good	Average	Bad	Best Specs	(L2 cacheK, video card, make)
386DX/33	8.8	7.8	5.0	3.9	n/a
486DX/33	15.7	12.8	11.8	10.1	n/a
DX2/50	23.4	21.5	19.7	17.8	256, VLB Genoa 8500VL, Generic
DX2/66	28.4	27.4	23.3	19.0	256, VLB Stealth 32 VRAM, Dan
DX2/100	36.0	31.5	26.0	18.9	256, VLB Number 9, Dell
Pentium 66	33.3	31.9	30.5	24.3	256, PCI Stealth 64 VRAM, Generic
Pentium 75	41.6	35.0	32.5	19.3	256b, PCI Hercules, homemade
Pentium 90	49.8	40.0	34.1	19.2	256b, PCI Hercules, homemade
Pentium 100	55.1	48.8	42.4	34.0	256b, PCI Hercules Stingray, homemade
Pentium 120	57.5	55.4	53.8	48.9	256b, PCI Hercules, homemade
Pentium 133	64.1	60.8	56.6	54.0	256, PCI ATI Mach64, Gateway

L2 cacheK: level two or secondary cache in kilobytes. Some motherboards have extra RAM on board to cache or store the main memory, speeding up memory access and performance. Figures suffixed with a ‘b’ note ‘burst cache’ which is a new, faster version of that memory.

Video card: a bit obvious really, but PCI is Intel’s common industry-standard bus type, while VLB stands for Vesa Local Bus, which isn’t so common these days.

Make: the branding on the machine. Dan, Dell and Gateway are big boys, homemade obviously refers to self-constructed models, and generic means an unbranded machine.

SO?

The full table of results (too big to print here) makes interesting reading, especially when Jeff Rollason compiles

them into a reading list for would-be machine buyers and upgrades. Here’s what he says:

Overdrive processors

“These are probably a waste of time with older (pre 1994) motherboards.”

A 486DX/100 clocked up with an overdrive managed 26.0FPS on an old motherboard, but 31.4 on a newer machine.

Video cards

“The Trident PT540 looks like a card to avoid!”

A Pentium 100 with this PCI video card on board managed only a paltry 29.2FPS, which is about equal to a good DX2/66. The same machine was tested with four different video cards and recorded a 32% variation in the results, confirming the need for a good graphics card if you want maximum *Doom* (or maximum other games of course).

“In particular, *Doom* ran half as fast with a Diamond Stealth Viper VRAM than with the older, cheaper generic DRAM ET4000/W32.”

He also noticed that cards which use interleaved RAM (such as the Hercules Dynamite Power) do not offer extra benefits for DOS games, and only provide acceleration under Windows.

ISA bus

“Don’t even think about using an ISA bus video card!!”

PCI or VLB

“The conventional wisdom is that PCI is better, with its technical advantages.” However, citing some magazines’ benchmarks, Jeff concluded that VLB are generally faster, “sometimes up to 30%”. This could well be because P66, P100, and P133 machines run PCI buses at 33MHz, so “486 VLB machines may have an advantage that the Pentium PCI machines

do not have”. Saying that however, most Pentiums these days are PCI-based, so you haven’t got much choice, have you? You can blame Intel for that.

AMD versus Intel

AMD, a chip manufacturer, released a set of ‘clone’ Intel chips last year but “the Intel 486DX/100 machines seem to be some 10% faster than the AMD DX/100 machines”. The Intel chip, however, has a larger 16K cache than the AMD’s 8K, which could speed things up noticeably.

Memory

The machines with 8MB RAM versus those with 16MB showed no appreciable speed increases. If you’re looking for faster games you may be best advised to save your pennies and go for a better video card. **Z**



A Red Box P90

If you want to run the latest games you're going to need a decent Pentium, make no mistake. One of the best machines for the serious PC

gamer we've come across is the Red Box P90. Not only does it sport a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, 16Mb of RAM and a glistening Itek Liyama 17-inch monitor, it also comes with a CH Flight Stick and a set of rather beefy Zydec Zy-Fi 2 speakers (see below).

If you're in the know and in search of even greater performance, Red Box will be happy to sort you out with a machine built to your exact specification. If you know nothing about PCs, but want to play *Magic Carpet 2* and *EF2000* without any problems, Red Box will point you in the right direction and recommend a machine spec that suits your needs and your pocket and set it up just how you want it.

All Red Box machines come with both DOS and Windows 3.11 pre-installed, as well as a copy of Windows 95, and feature a special Red Box directory that allows you to reset your machine to its former glory should you get in a muddle editing your Config.sys and Autoexec.bat. All this, plus 24-hour delivery and very patient technical support – why traipse for ages up and down the high street when mail order is this easy?

Contact Red Box on 01480 405541 for further details.

Zydec Zy-Fi Pro 2 speakers

These speakers came out tops in our last speaker round-up (in issue 25) and represent excellent value for money.

Nine inches high and five inches wide, they sport a deep throaty bass and chirpy treble; the volume, treble and bass can be adjusted with separate controls and the whole lot is finished in a pleasing off-white colour. If you've got room on your desk, go buy some.

Contact Zydec on 01386 769400.

Price: £59.99

Forte VFX-1 Headset

Virtual Reality is now available, although admittedly at a price. The VFX-1 features the clearest

resolution we've yet seen (LCD resolution 789x230), a built-in microphone, tracking, pitch and yaw, Cyberpuck controller and VIP card (for plugging in loads of other peripherals into the back of your machine, such as the forthcoming Cyberglove and Cybergun), and comes complete with playable demos of loads of top games, including *Descent*, *Dark Forces* and, of course, *Doom*. You can try and win one in our compo on page 131, or shell out the full cost of £599 (plus VAT). It's a lot of fun and the best headset we've seen (reviewed issue 32).

Contact UK distributors Fifth Dimension Technologies on 0181-974 2044 for further details.



CH Flight Stick

Still one of the best all-round sticks on the market at the moment, the CH Flight Stick is ideal for just about every flight sim, combat sim, space

sim or shoot 'em up you'd ever care to play.

The CH Flight Stick has four fire buttons, a coolly hat and sliding throttle control – it's well-built and capable of taking some very serious punishment (see our 'Drop Test' in issue 26 if you don't believe us) and remains comfortable in the hand for long periods. A bargain at just £79.99.

Contact CH Products on 0121-327 4499 for further details.



Intel Pentium Overdrive chip

The keenly-awaited Pentium upgrade chip is finally here. Now you can upgrade your sloth-like P83 with ease – all you have to do is slot the overdrive chip onto your motherboard.

For most machines, all you'll need to do is take out your old processor and slot in the new one, and hey voilà! – you've got yourself a Pentium (er, well, sort of). The Intel P83 overdrive chip costs £219 (plus VAT) and works in 33MHz 486 units, while the P63 chip is only £199 (plus VAT) and works in 25 and 50MHz machines.

Contact Intel on 01793 696204.



Gravis Gamepad

We reckon this is still the best gamepad that money can buy and it's been an outstanding

performer in all of our joystick round-ups. The Gravis Gamepad features four independent buttons, an eight-way directional keypad, a removable joystick and can be switched to cater for left and right handers. A classic gaming peripheral that no gamer should be without and a bargain at around £20.

Contact Gravis on 0171-352 9402 for further details.

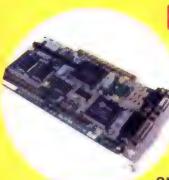


US Robotics Sportster 28.8 + fax modem

Get on-line with the minimum of fuss with a

US Robotics external modem. The 28,800bps (bits per second) external unit is very easy to fit, and should save you money in the long run with quicker down-load times (as long as the on-line services you plan to use are compatible, in other words they don't only have 14,400bps modems at their end!). You'll need to buy a telephone socket doubler (costing only £2 to £3) or extension and invest in a fast serial card, from (£20) if you want even speedier down-loads (optional).

Contact US Robotics on 01753 811180.



Matrox MGA Millennium Graphics Card

This little beauty came out tops in our graphics card round-up (issue 29) and will transform your PC's

performance dramatically, as long as you've got a decent PCI bus system. In our infamous *Doom 2* frame rate test, the card clocked up a blistering 53.52 frames per second and burned through every other test we put it through, thanks to its on-board 2Mb of WRAM and MGA 2064W chipset. At £255 (plus VAT) it's not as good a buy as the nifty all-rounder Number Nine 9FX Vision 330 card (which is a bit of a bargain at £144 (plus VAT), but if you want a performance card, you'd have to go a long long way to beat it.

Contact Matrox on 01793 614002 and Number Nine on (US) 617 492 0999 for further details.



SoundBlaster Discovery CD 4x Kit

The SoundBlaster brand was quickly adopted as the industry standard some time ago, with the result that if a piece of software isn't 'SoundBlaster Compatible' then in most cases it probably isn't really worth having.

The new SoundBlaster Discovery CD 4x Kit includes an internal quad-speed IDE CD-ROM drive, an 'industry standard' SoundBlaster 16 audio card and stereo speakers, and comes with a bumper package of 18 CD-ROM titles, including popular games such as *Wing Commander Academy*, *Ultima VII*, *Populous II* and *Ultima Underworld*.

The package, which retails at around £300 (plus VAT) represents good value for the serious gamer who is seeking to upgrade their system and is keen to boost their CD-ROM collection at the same time.

Contact Creative Technology on 01734 344322 for further details.



3D Blaster Graphics Accelerator Card

There's certainly been a fair amount of hype surrounding the new 3D

Blaster wonder chip that claims to turn your humble PC into a wunderkind games machine. The new Creative card, which will sell for around £249, will bring arcade quality to 3D graphics to the PC, and has already won support from major developers including Electronic Arts, Virgin, Microsoft and Ocean, and comes complete with six games. If the hype is to be believed, the 3D Blaster graphics accelerator will run games in SVGA at twice the frame rate of a machine without it in VGA (as long as it's supported) and turn the PC into the leading games platform by 1997.

So if you've got the cash, why not get in on the action early?

Contact Creative Labs on 01734 344322 for further details. Z



Yep, it's that time of year again when the turkey starts to get a bit emotional, family and friends you haven't spoken to all year ring you up and you can finally begin laying down some serious hints as to what kit you want for Crimbo. The trouble is, they probably don't know what the hell you're going on about, so to make things easier (and to avoid disappointment) we've compiled the PC Zone Reader's Wish List, which is packed full of choice PC goodies. Just circle the item(s) you're interested in, leave the magazine open at this page in an opportune position and hope that someone takes the (not so subtle) hint.

Sony SRS speakers



Duncan Swain tries his best to perforate his ear drums with two spanking new sets of Sony speakers.

A SET OF SPEAKERS FOR YOUR PC used to mean two ugly little grey plastic boxes sitting next to your monitor that were slightly, if any, better than your PC's existing sound system. Sound effects and music sounded like they were being played in next door's living room rather than in your own, and the bass and treble were almost interchangeable - in fact you were lucky if you got a volume control.

Today's speakers are about to undergo something of a revolution, thanks in part to the developments made in the audio, hi-fi and home cinema arenas. It won't be too long before you'll be able to get 3D stereo sound, two-speaker Surround Sound and even something called a Spatializer Audio Processor from certain PC speakers - if you have around £100 or so to spare. This review looks at two new sets of Sony speakers aimed at the cheaper end of the PC market.

As little as £29 buys you a pair of SRS-PC20s which can chuck out 1w per speaker - probably loud enough for the average gamer, but not exactly the type of sound to make your ears bleed.

Both new sets of speakers are 'active', meaning that they require an external

power source of some sort to operate the built-in amplifier. Unfortunately the PC20 speakers are not supplied with either the necessary power adaptor or the alternative four 1.5v batteries, so they can't be used straight from the box.

The controls are simple, just a power switch and a volume knob, providing a far easier way to control volume than the on-screen via software alternative.

The speakers themselves are nicer to look at than the more expensive PC40s and occupy less desk space, which can be an important factor for some users. The sound they produce is noticeably better than what we managed to get from the pair of integrated speakers built into the PC we used for our test, and also far superior to some other similarly sized active speakers we first reviewed about six months ago.

However, bass notes sometimes seemed to get lost and at full volume hissing and distortion was significant.

Conversely, the SRS-PC40s are capable of producing 3w per channel. The difference is immediately apparent: crank up the volume and there is no distortion, even at the loudest setting, of bass or treble notes. This is partly

thanks to the Bass Boost system which is operated from the control panel on the front of the left-hand speaker, and also the 'dynamic sound duct' which apparently guarantees a "rich and powerful bass". Overall, the sound quality is much clearer and crisper than with the PC20s.

The 9v power supply is actually supplied with the speaker system this time, which is useful as it cuts down on the extra expense of the six batteries you would otherwise have to buy.

The PC40s certainly have enough power behind them to satisfy most users, even if used primarily for music rather than games, and will produce enough decibels to get the neighbours round if you're not careful. **Z**

Score

55

SRS-PC20

Score

85

SRS-PC40

It's worth shelling out the extra £30 for the PC40s

Price: SRS-PC20: £29.00/SRS-PC40: £59.00

Release Date: Out now

Manufacturer: Sony Tel: 0181-760 0500



Aztech 668-041

CD-ROM GAMES USED TO BE PRETTY rubbish because developers thought "Whahey! 700MB to fill up with swish pre-rendered animation and pretty pictures" and proceeded to forget about little things like gameplay. These days, however, while most games still use animation, this is usually lavished on 'tarting-up' purposes, and the capacity of the CD-ROM is used for lots of extra levels which would quickly fill up a decent sized hard disk.

The recent introduction of cheap quad-speed drives has swiftly rendered double-speed units as unfashionable as 'Magic Eye' posters and, while they're not twice as good, they do speed up things like video playback on faster PCs.

Of course, progress being what it is, Aztech has decided to crank up its range again with the 668-041, a six-speed drive. Although drives of this speed have been around for a while, the Aztech's price tag puts it firmly in the 'buy me, poor person' price bracket. Whether or not the extra speed makes any difference, however, is another matter. It's true that the disc may spin faster, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the PC is able to take advantage of this.

We carried out some speed tests on the Aztech, and while block transfer rates were improved, the seek time (or the time taken to search for a particular piece of data on the disc) hadn't increased by the same amount. What all this means in practice is that things like video clips are smoother, but the speed when playing a game from CD isn't really any better.

Still, if you're after a new CD-ROM drive, it's worth bearing in mind that the 668-041 is only a bit more than most quad-speeds, so it's well worth a look. **Z**

Score

79

A six-speed CD-ROM drive that's not quite as fast as it sounds in practice.

Price: £149.00 Release Date: Out now
Manufacturer: Aztech Tel: 01734 814121

It's a CD-ROM drive... it's a six-speed, it's a six-speed CD-ROM drive!
Dave Mathieson has a look at a CD-ROM drive that's six times as fast as a one-speed.

PC ZONE

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Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... "I can suck golf balls through a hose".



The Elder Scrolls

Great game, shame about the riddles! Personally I much prefer role-playing games to adventures, because I'd rather kill something that's giving me grief than spend days finding the solution to some stupid puzzle – which is why I bought *The Elder Scrolls*. You can imagine my horror when I found out that the game is full of obscure riddles which you have to solve to make any progress. I hate riddles and don't know the answer to one in particular which is stupid, pointless and bloody annoying!

It begins: "From the beginning of Eternity, to the end of time and space... What am I?" Do you know the answer, because I'm damn sure I don't!

Ian Benson, Margate

Some ravers might suggest that the answer to all their problems is an 'E'. Think about it.

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR

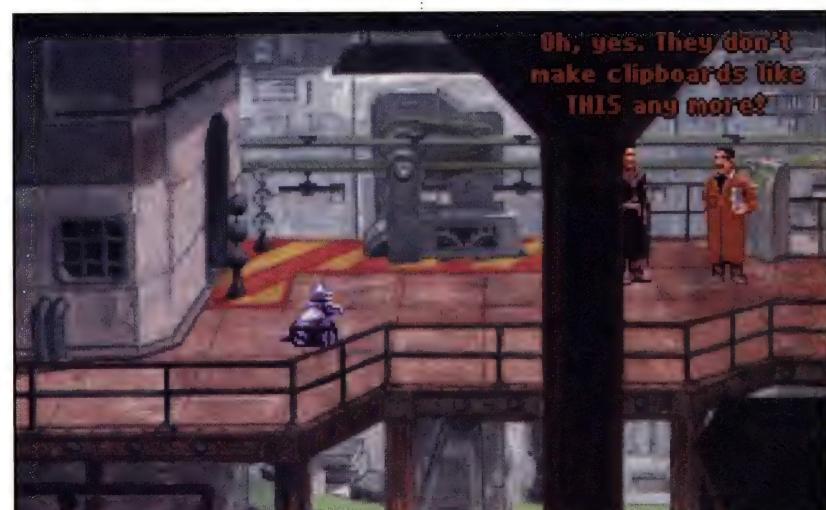
Beneath A Steel Sky

I thought I'd been pretty clever by managing to get past the fingerprint-checking scanner with a copy of Colston's prints taken from his drinks glass, but I very soon came to a halt. I climbed through a vent and found a hole which leads underground, but as soon as I get inside, some kind of monster kills me. What do I need to do to destroy this creature?

Paul Miles, Birmingham

I hate horror movies when the hero walks into a pitch-black room looking for the monster that's just ripped the heads off his buddies. "Turn the bloody light on!" I scream.

Just near the entrance to the hole is a light socket. Remember the light bulb you removed at the start of the game, when you stuffed explosive in the socket? Now you can use the light bulb to brighten things up a bit.



The Bottom Line

If you get into trouble or are a bit scared, ring us on TruePlayer Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for free tips support.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1995. If you try to pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

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HEX	DECIMAL
09H	9
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

Dungeon Master II

The Legend of Skullkeep



It took years to get to the small screen, but Interplay's *Dungeon Master II* is now riding high in the role-player's game chart. Whether you're a hardened dragon slayer or an innocent newbie, the dungeons of Skullkeep are stuffed with cunning traps. This month we've cobbled together the solutions to the most difficult bits, so if you're stuck, you should find the answer you're looking for right here.

Before you start

The torches in wall holders are the best form of light, but you have to watch out as they go out eventually. However, they can be recharged by placing back in a wall holder for a moment.

Your quest

The main purpose of the game is to provide electrical power to a device on the top floor of the castle. This power will be used to help you blast open an exit out onto the clouds, where you will face the final bad guy and destroy him.

Your first big problem is to find the four clan key

pieces of which are needed to open the door to the Skullkeep tower. The area outside the tower is a training area where your team can build up necessary skills and learn basic spells; you must get your magic users trained to cast the light and fireball spell as quickly as possible (FUL and FUL IR). Your priest must be able to create a healing potion and a poison cure while holding a flask (VI and DES VEN).

Food is found by killing and eating the wandering monsters, and big money is made by selling the weapons which are dropped when you kill the bad guys. You can make big bucks by selling the axes dropped by the Viking giants.

Unfortunately non-material monsters such as ghosts, whirlwinds and ghost skeletons can only be killed by spells like OH KATH RA and DES EW, or a swipe from a Vorpal sword.

General layout

Skullkeep castle is situated in the centre of the map. You begin in the square of shops to the west of the castle. The fountain in the square contains more than just water, so have a quick feel around. The black star nearby is the first of many teleports (use the tech shield to activate this device).

Travel first to the north-west of the castle where you'll see Stonehenge, guarded by whirlwind creatures. Here lies a clan key plus a lightning key. Now head for the north-east corner to the wolves' lair to find the second clan key plus the moon key.

The eastern edge of the map is the home of the Vikings, where the third clan key lies on a rock table. Take the northern exit from this area and you'll find three other shops.

The final piece of the clan key is on a table inside a small dungeon on the south side of the map. There is an important hidden wall switch in the entrance area. To enable you to pick up



Skullkeep, Level 1

the key you must first place some money on the table. There is another shop nearby, beside the blood red fountains, which specialises in magical weapons – it's well worth a visit.

Before you bother entering Skullkeep, it's important to make sure you are fully armed and that you have trained your entire team to cast magic – going in early just isn't worth the hassle. (Note: certain items of jewellery and magical weapons give non-magic users the power to begin to cast a few spells.)

Skullkeep entrance gates

To open the three gates in the entrance hall you must turn to face the three wall switches. Quickly press the three buttons in the sequence left, right, centre, and then run backwards through the three gates. To move quickly enough you must either remove all heavy objects from your party, or cast the agility spell OH IR ROS.

Pit room

To the left is a room of pits containing a magical sword. If you pick up the sword an extra pit will appear to block your exit. Leave the sword until you find a minion map which allows you to create a minion which can fly over the pits to pick up the sword for you.

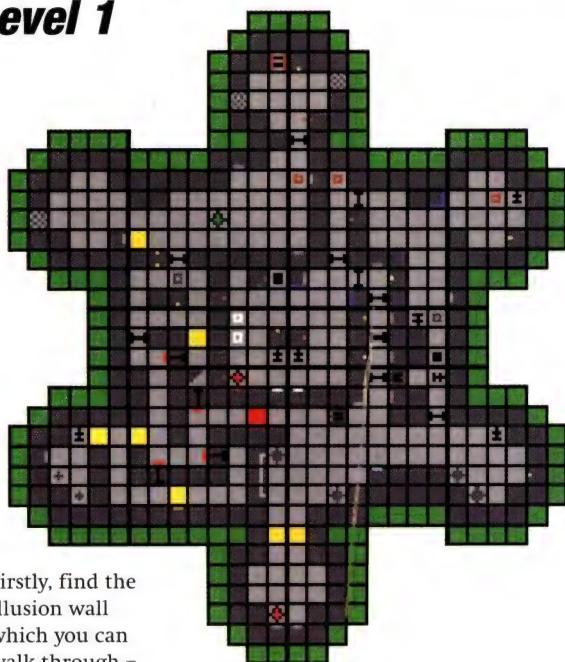
Cauldron room

Place a manna blossom plus a staff in the cauldron to produce a serpent staff.

Fireball corridor

Beyond the cauldron room is a room with a central core and a floor pad which controls its exit door. Standing on the floor pad quickly opens and shuts the exit door. In the corridor beyond the door is a series of tech eye sensors which control a fireball trap. Your two problems are:

- 1 How to dismantle the tech eyes
- 2 How to get through the exit door.



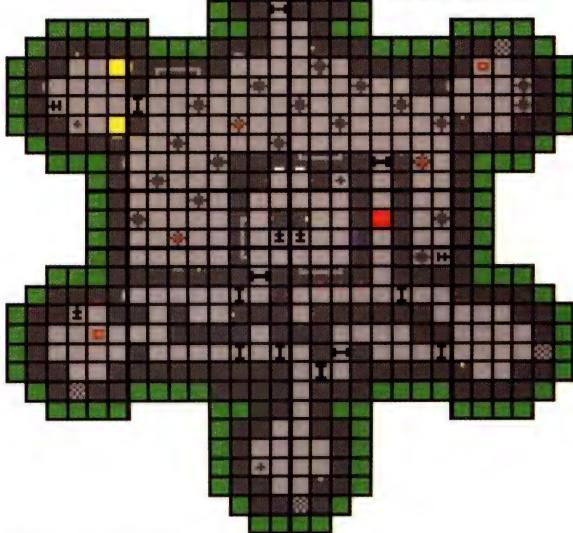
Firstly, find the illusion wall which you can walk through – this wall is on the top left hand corner of the room. Halfway through the wall, turn left and press the small secret button which will remove a further secret wall. Inside the secret room there are now two wall plates which can be removed and the tech eyes dismantled.

»

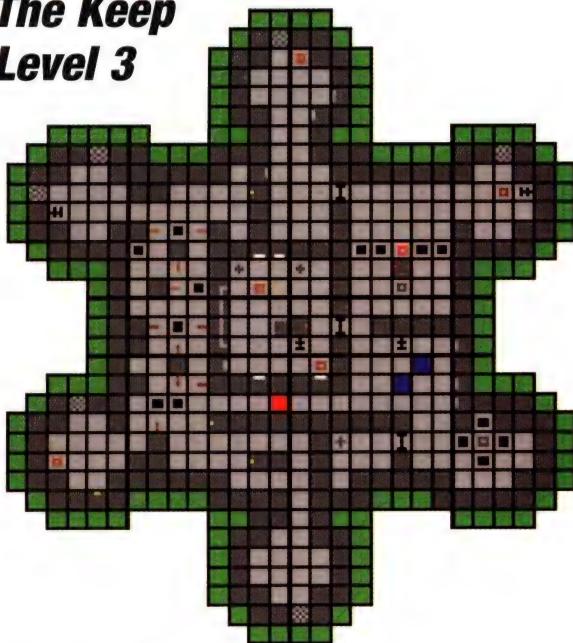




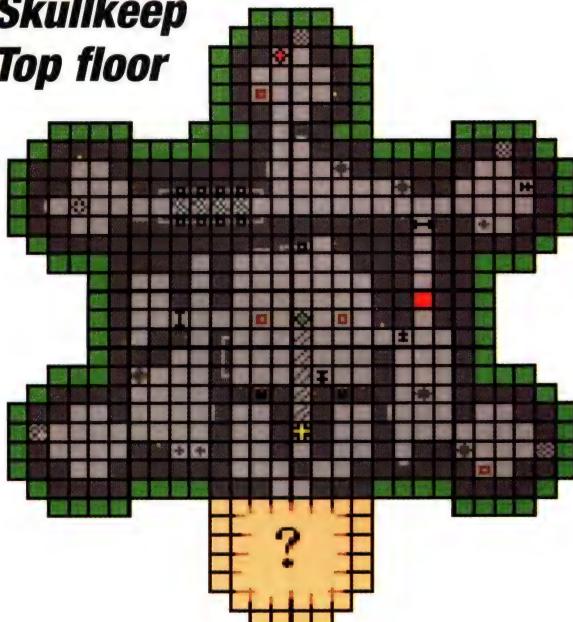
Skullkeep Level 2



The Keep Level 3



Skullkeep Top floor



Return to the main room and stand in the bottom right corner facing the floor pad with the exit door to your right. Throw an object towards the floor pad, turn right and run for the door. You should reach the door just as the thrown object hits the floor pad and lets you through the open door.

By using your magic map you can see the illusion walls in the corridor before you. By passing quickly through the walls you will be able to find the rear of the sensors to disable the fireball trap. Alternatively, cast the repel spell ZO BRO ROS to repulse the fireballs.

Gearwheel doors

There is a corridor with a series of doors which will not open until a separate gearwheel is placed in each wall alcove next to the doors; the floor next to the doors turns into a pit if you hesitate. You can buy additional gearwheels in the shops near the Vikings – remember to buy a vacuum tube as well. However, there is a secret wall alcove near to the first door which contains additional gears; this alcove is revealed once the first door has been opened.

The basement

Sooner or later you'll end up in the castle basement; the only way out is via a blue transporter behind a locked door, but the key is held by the caveman creature who casts poisonous clouds. Kill the caretaker and he'll drop the key.

The boiler room

In order to get the generator going you must first get the furnace stoked and burning; the rockmen in the room below the boiler will light it and keep it going, provided you destroy the enemy minion who stands sentry in front of the furnace. You can leave a sentry minion here yourself, but throughout the game you will need to return to the furnace and keep renewing your sentry or it will go out.

Pump room

This is above the boiler room. Switch everything on for the water to flow.

Ram pits

To cross the room which contains the moving battering rams, start by moving to the left of the first pit and face the ram. Cast the agility spell then move forward past it. Take one pace forward, turn right and then move quickly forward three steps to pass two rams. Turn left and negotiate the final rams.

The Roof

The lightning pit

There is a difficult pit preceded by a floor panel which controls a lightning bolt. As you step onto the pit it opens and shuts as a lightning bolt crashes above it; fall through it and you'll be attacked by ghostly skeletons.

Stand before the floor and use the magic map to create a floating eye. Send the eye across the pit and into the small alcove beyond. Now move forward onto the floor pad and the lightning bolt will destroy the eye – leaving the pit in the closed position.

The flying chest and the big barrels

In the room of the archers there is a flying chest. This can be destroyed and its contents obtained easily enough by trapping it in the room with the floor pads and the fireballs. Now 'freeze' the chest with a magic box and destroy it with fireballs. (There is also a magic staff which casts the freeze spell.)

There are two large barrels in this area which can be destroyed with a couple of fireballs; it's worth doing this as they then reveal useful contents.

Master key

Retain the master key after you have used it as it opens two doors.

The fireball reflector trap

In the room with the pits and fireball reflectors there is a floor pad which controls the emission of a fireball from the opposite side of the central pillar. Switches on the other sides of the pillar control two reflectors at the other side of the pits. Use the magic map to see the position of the far reflectors, and the path of the fireball; to close the pits you are supposed to move things around until you can reflect a fireball back into the spot where it was created. It is easier to simply move one of the reflectors on the far side of the pit so that you cast one of your own fireballs to hit the other side of the pillar.

Once the pits are closed you can cross the room and use a fireball to blast open the locked door on the left hand side of the room. There is a ladder on the right hand side to the upper level.

The skull and onyx key trap

Beyond the electrical shock corridor is the room containing the wall alcove where the skull and onyx keys lie. Picking up both keys turns on the magical magnet which will not let you leave the spot you are standing in. The

Cloud Level

trick is to take only the onyx key, then leave and open the onyx door. Inside the room there is a wall switch which lowers a ladder into the room of moving transporters. Return the onyx key and take the skull key. Go to the room below and find the ladder back up into the onyx room. Use the skull key to create a magical transporter nearby which will move you inside the skull room. Use a fireball to destroy the table then move the reflectors out into the crystal room.

The crystal room

The trick here is to position the two reflectors on top of the floor drains next to the central crystal in such a way that they will direct the fireballs from the wall into the crystal. Once the boiler and the water is working in the boiler room and all the wall switches in the crystal room have been turned on, you'll be able to blast a hole out through the outside wall to the clouds.

The roof

There is a generator on the roof guarded by a troop of archers. The archers can be destroyed, but no useful purpose seems to be obtained by clearing this area.

The final confrontation

Out on the clouds lurks the final enemy – and be warned, it's bloody hard to kill him! There appears to be no clever way to dispose of this sonofabitch – it's simply a matter of wearing him down. By creating hordes of attack minions you can weaken him enough to take him out in one final battle, but this is a spot where nimble fingers and a steady hand seem to be the only way out. Make sure you have loads of manna for the creation of attack minions, and that you also have the emerald orb so that you can heal your warriors during the fight, or you'll never get through it.

The creation of your own attack minions is the only way you can survive



in the later stages, so make sure you learn to create your own army of flying warriors to protect your hide.

Safe sleep

Having a kip in the corner to build up your strength is necessary every so often, but you have to be aware that while you are asleep enemy minions are generated and they'll take you out before you can recover. So to avoid being wiped out in this way, create a barrier of guard minions around you to guard your peaceful slumber. **Z**

Oh Oh

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 • HD version (AW20A)
 Master of Magic
 • CD version (AW20A/CD)
 The UltraSound Experience, demo's from Cyclemania, Battle Bugs and more.



December 94
 • HD version (AW21A)
 System Shock, Doom II Level Editor
 • CD version (AW21A/CD)
 Doom levels plus some for Doom II, demo of DeltaV, Transport Tycoon plus loads more.



January 95
 • HD version (AW22A)
 Discworld
 • CD version (AW22A/CD)
 Cyberwar, Creature Shock, Magic Carpet demo and more.



February 95
 • HD version (AW23A)
 Cannon Fodder 2
 • CD version (AW23A/CD)
 U.S. Navy Fighters, Discworld, King's Quest 7, Noctropolis and more



March 95
 • HD version (AW24A)
 Kick Off 3: European Challenge
 • CD version (2 CDs) (AW24A/CD)
 Demo of Alone 3, Heretic, The Lion King plus more
 Fully running version of OS/2 Warp



April 95
 • HD version (AW25A)
 XCOM-Terror from the Deep
 • CD version (AW25A/CD)
 The final Doom showdown, demos such as Jungle Strike, Inferno, MetaTech.



May 95
 • HD version (AW26A)
 Pyrotechnica
 • CD version (AW26A/CD)
 demo of BioForge, Last Eden, Rise of the Triad, Orion Conspiracy, Full Throttle



June 95
 • HD version (AW27A)
 Baldies and Virtual Pool
 • CD version (AW27A/CD)
 StarTrek: The Next Generation interactive demo, plus demos of Slipstream 5000, Warriors and loads more.



July 95
 • HD version (AW28A)
 Jagged Alliance
 • CD version (AW28A/CD)
 playable demos of Alien Breed: Tower Assault; Braindead 13 and Kingdom: The Far Reaches plus a round up of action demos

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WORMS PLAYABLE PC DEMO - <http://www.team17.com/>

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing PC Zone Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

BUYERS' GUIDE

Issue 6 – September 1993

Blade Of Destiny: Reams Of Araria

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to 'serious' role-players than your average gamer.

Blow Force

(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Cassier's Palace For Windows

(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99
A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

Fields Of Glory

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

Flashback

(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99
It's Prince Of Persia in the future (but this time he's got a gun).

Flight – The Ultimate Challenge

(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two-player mode.

Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle

(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99
Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for our roast beef and dumplings taste buds.

MM-2: Future

(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99
Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

Monopoly

(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99
A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

Open Golf

(50) Ocean – Sport (deleted)
A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

Pinball Dreams

(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99
As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.

Prisoner!

(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99
A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

Rage To Kill

(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

Return Of The Phantasm

(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99
Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too easy and short to justify the price.

Sensible Soccer

(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99
The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

Space Legends

(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99
You'll like at least two out of three.

The Immortal

(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
At least four Sunday afternoons' play, we reckon.

Tornado

(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not recommended for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sarissa

(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Short, sharp missions (and plenty of 'em) combine to make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)

(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99
Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Our score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar's Palace

(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Catch Of Steel

(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)

(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dawn (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Erie The Unsinkable (CD)

(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II

(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99
It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom

(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warlord Beta

(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gambit

(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Unfortunately a good idea that doesn't translate into a good game.

Marshall

(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Forces

(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving 'story-driven' tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the 'soft' story.

Lands Of Lore

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99
A tasty and involving reminder of what Eye Of The Beholder III could have been.

Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Playable but crap for the price.

Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LINX Attack Chopper

(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Simulation £14.99
Still one of the classic flight sims.

Lone

(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99
Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

Links 10'

(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Reasonable mid-table golf game.

Micro-Golf

(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99

An excellent add-on for Falcon 3.0 fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

Micro-Hockey

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99

A great version of a brilliant game.

Prism Gold!

(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

Railroad Tycoon Deluxe

(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99

Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)

(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!

Rules Of Engagement 2

(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99

A game of great depth and complexity.

Scalp Team

(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99

In storyboard form this probably looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Shame The Sorceror

(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99

At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99

An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (category it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patriotic

(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99

Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

Wing Commander Academy

(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99

This is only really worthwhile for Wing Commander combat addicts.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess

(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99

Stalemate for the Battle Chess series.

Blue Force (CD)

(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

As you can see by our score, we reckon this is a criminal waste of a CD.

Conqueror Kings

(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99

The rather second-rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker

(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99

As if it's not bad enough that this is an appallingly bad poker game, it's also a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 3.0

(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Simulation £35.00

The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying 'game'.

Gear Works

(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99

Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit

(50) Hit Squad – Driving Game £12.99

Playable but crap for the price.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels

(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99

Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football

(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99

Too much violence, not enough game. One can only turn to Origin and ask, 'Why?'

Toddlers

(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99

Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Blue Angels

(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99

Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football

(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99

Too much violence, not enough game. One can only turn to Origin and ask, 'Why?'

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat

(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99

Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix

(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99

Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito

(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99

A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99

The next best thing to Ultima.

Dino Dino's Goal

(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99

Kick Off with sideways options (but it works).

Not as good as Sensible Soccer.

Dracula

(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99

A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II

(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99

Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro

(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99

The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

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(Left) *X-Wing*: groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Goblins

(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle £39.99

An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook

(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99

At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper

(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99

Ugly, unpleasant and boring. We know, give it a job with PC Zone.

Jutland

(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99

Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99

Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magic Candle I

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99

Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football

(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99

Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.

Privateer

(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99

Wing Commander fans will love this. X-Wing fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm

(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99

Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as Sim City.

Steel Thunder

(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99

It's reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II

(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC is hindered unless you have a gamepad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations

(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Simulator £19.99

Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.

V For Victory 4: Gold-Juno-Sword

(78) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99

It's still the best computer wargame system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War

(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99

An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe

(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99

Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac

(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99

Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe

(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99

It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics

(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99

Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Breed

(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99

Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands

(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99

The ideas and graphics are interesting; the gameplay, however, isn't.

Goblins 2

(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99

Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing

(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99

The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught

(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £44.99

Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park

(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99

Despite some irritating flaws, this is an atmospheric and addictive game.

Knights Of The Sky

(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99

A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innsbrook

(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99

If you really want another Links course, then this is one.

Links

(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99

An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

Lords Of Power

(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99

A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2

(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving Game £34.99

A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive

(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99

Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift

(70) Kixx – Puzzle Game £12.99

A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below

(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99

Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

Protostar (CD)

(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99

Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

Return To Zork (CD)

(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99

Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that Zork was sacred. Ha!

Return To Zork

(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99

A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

Shadowcaster

(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.

Speed Racer

(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99

Nice intro, shame about the game.

Star Trek: Judgement Rites

(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99

The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is 'fascinating' but it isn't the best flight sim or adventure game.

Strike Squad

(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99

One look at the poor score should be enough to tell you what we think of the game. Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray

(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99

Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and longterm playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine

(89: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99

If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So come on then, what are you waiting for?

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(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99

Technically, the best pinball game there is,

but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac

(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99

Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe

(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99

It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics

(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99

Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Breed

(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99

Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands

(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99

The ideas and graphics are interesting; the

gameplay, however, isn't.

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(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer*: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

« D-Day

(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemonsgate

(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom

(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. Doom is the best. Need we say more?

Hired Guns

(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision

(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).

Mortal Kombat

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES Street Fighter II, but the best on the PC.

Nomad

(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies

(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95

The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original Pinball Dreams.

Reunion

(80: Recommended) Grand Slam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000

(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure Game £49.99

A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)

(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS

(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two UMS games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man

(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics

(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99

Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard

(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)

(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95

Well, it's not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines

(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99

Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls

(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99

Disappointing really.

Award Winner Gold Edition

(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99

Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2

(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99

Without a shadow of a doubt, this is the strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

A stunning improvement on an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment –

Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99

Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark – Sport £29.99

A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99

Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.

Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99

Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.

Fantastic Dizzy

(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99

What can we say? Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99

Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis

(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99

You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99

Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.

Megarace

(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99

A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99

Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance, we reckon you'll be hooked.

Microcosm

(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99

As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99

Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

StarLord

(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patriarch (CD)

(70) Daza Marketing – Strategy £39.99

A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99

Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer*: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet

(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99

If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the Darkseed affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99

Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99

More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

DragonSphere

(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99

A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99

So close, but more bugs than Watergate.

F1

(40) Domark – Sport £29.99

The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99

Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim

As that well known saying goes: 'If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love Hornet.'

Myst

(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Without doubt a love/hate relationship for Ultima purists.

Ravenloft

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99

It's finally got 'real' and produced a playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99

The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00

Stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team

(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99

This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster

(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock

(70) Reactor/UbiSoft – Adventure £44.99

Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99

Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery

(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99

Simply one of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Issue 16 – July 1994

Castles II

(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95

Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

Comanche (CD)

(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99

Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)

(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

Corridor 7

(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99

Nothing new or exciting.

Detroit

(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99

An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

Dragon's Lair

(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99

An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.

Eye Of The Storm

(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99

Very futuristic, very Elite and very, very crap.

Great Naval Battles 2

(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99

SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)

(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99

Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99

A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99

Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

Lucky's Casino Adventure

(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99

Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress

(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99

Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)

(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99

Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99

This is a highly original and addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

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74 of the Deep SVGA	29.99	Fiesta	26.99	Pinball Dreams 2/Disk	26.99	MT Powers 2/Disk	16.99	CH071 A To F For Mortal Kombat XVIII	1.25	M132 Winjammer V.2.30	1.25
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GAMES

WITCHAVEN (5) - Hand to hand bloody conquest with terrifying monsters and fearsome medieval weapons. Written with the new Duke Nukem 3D engine. Full disk or CD version £33
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 TYRIAN (2) - NOT on the CD. Epic Megagames excellent new shoot em up. Full disk or CD version £25
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 TEENAGENT - Good secret agent point and click animated graphic adventure. Full version £25
 RADIX: INTO THE VOID (3) - NOT on the CD. Epic Megagames excellent Descent type game. Full version £25.
 3D CYBERPUNK - Super new air hockey type game set in Doomy sort of rooms
 FUZZY'S WORLD OF MINIATURE SPACE GOLF (2) - PC Format Gold Award Winner - 90% rated zany golf game. Full disk or CD version £15
 DDM SOCKER 91 - Shareware's first proper soccer playing game
 GREAT AIR BATTLES - Pearl Harbour air combat simulator - high quality.
 DRAGON'S BANE - MAHJONG 2 - New Mahjong with editor etc. Full version £15
 DIGGERS - Superb new Lemmings type game
 SUPER SPEED - Overhead view car racing game
 ULTIMATE CHALLENGE GOLF - One of the most accurate and complex golf game ever
 OUTER RIDGE - Latest action packed 3D game
 SEARCH FOR FREEDOM (2) - Good new RPG RISE OF THE TRIACS (3) - Doom-type war game
 BREAKFREE - 3D break out with guns
 TUBULAR WORLDS - Excellent shoot em ups
 VINYL GODDESS FROM MARS - Jill of the Jungle type platform game from Union Logic
 WACKY WHEELS 3D (2) - Fun racing game
 KRYPTON EGG - THE ULTIMATE BREAKOUT - Highly recommended - try it!
 ALIEN CARNAGE (2) - Armed with flamethrower, grenades, etc you must free hostages
 HOCUS POCUS (2) - Fight Imps, ghosts, dragons and demons in Apogee's best ever adventure
 RAPTOR (2) - Apogee's best ever shoot em up
 BLAKE STONE (2) - Follow up to Wolfenstein
 DUKE NUKE 2 (2) - Apogee's platform game

NITEMARE 3D (2) - Wolfenstein type game
 OPERATION BODY COUNT (2) - Wolf 3D clone
 DESERT STORM COMMAND - Gulf war game
 NYET 3 - A large variety of Tetris games
 ZENTRIS - Like the original Tetris
 CLASSIC PINBALL - Difficult but great fun pinball
 MVP BRIDGE - Best bridge game
 6 CARD GAMES - Bridge, poker, patience, etc
 XMAS LEMMINGS - Dressed as Santa Claus

MUSIC

ZWELIGHT ZONE by CAPACALA - 4th at Assembly 95 - our favourite. Wonderful fish tank
 STARS: WONDERS OF THE WORLD BY NOON (2) - Winning demo at Assembly 95
 SBIGUS GRIND - Awesome new MOD player that displays people dancing in perfect time to the music
 CERES COMPOSER - Record/playback MIDI files
 CERES STUDIO SOUND - Windows 16 track
 WAV multitrack sample - professional product
 HEARTQUAKE (2) - Super megademo by Iguana
 PERFECT BALANCE - excellent new demo
 SHRINE by Guru Magic - brilliant new rave demo
 SCREAMTRACKER 3 - MOD music composer
 S3M MODULES (2) - Music for Screamtracker
 NOTEWORTHY WINDOWS - Musical score editor
 DUNGEON DWELLERS - Best demo of 95
 MUSIC EASE - Musical score editor and printer. Input from keyboard or MIDI
 WINJAMMER 2.3 - Full featured Windows MIDI sequencer.
 GOLDWAVE - Windows sound editor and recorder
 DRUMS PROFESSIONAL - Drums MIDI editor
 COMPACT DISC MASTER - DOS audio player
 MULTITRACKER - 32 track MOD editor
 FASTRACKER - MOD, MIDI, S3M editor/player
 INTROMAKER 30 - Make your own demos
 UNTITLED - Best ever 3D demo by Dust
 2ND REALITY (2) - Ultimate Future Crew demo
 MUZIKA - Windows - MIDI music score editor
 GMUSIC - 255 track MIDI sequencer
 SEQUENCER PLUS - Elaborate MIDI controller
 TREKVOCS - Star Trek VOC files
 MUSIC STYLES MIDI FILES - Blues, rock etc
 MOD FILES (3) - Loads of MOD files
 MIDI FILES (5) - Loads of MIDI files
 SOUND EFFECTS VOC FILES
 WINDOWS WAV FILES - Mainly sound effects
 BLASTER MASTER 6 - Edit sound files

EDUCATION

PC MICROSCOPE (2) - Biology tool for students. Analyse specimens under the microscope
 PC MICROSCOPE EXTRA SLIDES (5)
 GCSE MATHEMATICS - Calfacts
 GCSE PHYSICS - National curriculum
 GCSE SCIENCE - Multiple choice
 GCSE COMPUTER STUDIES
 WORD BY WORD FRENCH - GCSE French
 TOTAL CONCEPTS DINOSAURS (2) - As above
 WORD RESCUE - Superb Apogee spelling game
 MATH RESCUE - Superb Apogee maths game
 SEA SCHOOL - Superb kids maths game
 PRESCHOOL PACK - Excellent for 2-5 years
 TALKING TEACHER FOR SOUNDBOARDS
 ANIMATED ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION
 ANIMATED ALPHABET - for infants
 ANIMATED MATHS - for infants
 ANIMATED WORDS - for infants
 ANIMATED MULTIPLICATION AND DIVISION
 SIR ADDALOTS MINI MATH ADVENTURE
 THE COLOUR WIZARD - Colouring book, and art tutor
 EARLY SPANISH FOR SOUNDBOARDS
 GERMAN TUTOR - Learn German
 EDUCATIONAL ATLAS 1994 - Superb
 PC FASTTYPE VGA - Good typing tutor
 PC TUTOR - All about computers

GENERAL

FILE COMPRESSORS - ARJ, PKZip etc
 LIBERTY BASIC - V/E compatible prog language
 EXECUTOR (2) - Macintosh emulator - copy disks and run lots of Mac programmes on your PC.
 CROSS STITCH DESIGNER FOR WINDOWS
 WILL WRITER - Write your own
 SCREEN THIEF - Best DOS screen savers
 KITTH N KIN FOR WINDOWS - Genealogy
 BROTHERS KEEPER v5.1 (2) - Best genealogy
 FAMILY TREE JOURNAL - Make history books
 FOOTBALL FORECAST - Forecast pools results
 BOOKIE BREAKER - Horse racing prediction
 GROWIT MK II - Superb garden planner
 ORGANISE YOUR RECORDS, TAPES, CDs
 EASY BASE - Superb easy to use database

GRAPHICS/RAYTRACING

PERSISTENCE OF VISION v2.2 (2) - New version of the best raytracing program
 ANAPIANT 3D Animator - Make animated movies, games, presentations etc. Superb
 POV CAD - Wire frame CAD add on for POVRAY
 MORAY - Grid style editor for POVRAY
 GUM 3D INTERACTIVE MODELLER - for POVRAY
 DANIMATOR - Windows POVRAY animator
 RAYCE V2.8 - POV compatible raytracer

VIVID II RAYTRACER & VIVIDTRA (2) - Good

D-MORPH - Best TGA/GIF morphing program
 HOME PLAN - Layout your house
 GRAPHICS WORKSHOP FOR DOS
 PROTOCAD - 3D computer aided designer
 PRINT PARTNER v3 - Make banners, signs etc.

CHRISTMAS PACK

(6 disks) includes over 300 mono and colour PCX pictures of Santa and Christmas related stuff. Santa screen saver. Yuletide Images PCX Windows Christmas Card list program.

MONO PCX CLIPART

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 CARTOONS - all in full colour
 STAR TREK & STAR WARS (2) - Mainly Star Trek

WINDOWS PACK

WINDOWS GAMES PACK (2) - 30 games including Pool, Pacman, Backgammon, Tetris, Risk & loads of card and board games
 WINDOWS CARD GAMES (2) - Loads of them
 WINDOWS TETRIS GAMES (2) - 9 Tetris games
 MAHJONG FOR WINDOWS - Superb & addictive
 BRIDGE FOR WINDOWS - The card game
 FAXMAIL v4.10 - Full featured fax system
 PHOTO VISION PRO - Image manipulation tool
 SCREEN SAVERS (2) - loads of them
 FONT SPEC PRO - Full font handling utilities
 CD PLAYER - with database & loads of features
 WINSPELL - Spellchecker for Write
 JAMWARE ICONS - nearly 2000 of them
 TOMMYSOFT CAD (2) - Best CAD package
 GRAPHICS WORKSHOP - Latest version
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All titles are also available on disk. Price £2.25 per disk. Number of disks in brackets after title if more than one.

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This is probably the best ever 3D game - much more advanced than Doom. Shareware version on disk £10.

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March 95 version of the CD advertised at the top of this page. Many programs listed above and lots more. 350mb of quality shareware.

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(Right) *IndyCar Racing*: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max*: The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)



The Settlers

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99

A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99

Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.

UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99

This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack

(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99

Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95

Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

Al Qudam: The Genie's Curse

(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99

The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime

(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99

Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99

Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V

(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99

Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency

(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99

Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer

(57) Empire – Sport £29.99

Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm

(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99

Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open

(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)

(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99

A perfectly seivable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)

(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99

The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord

(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99

An old idea made new with some interesting twists.

Pinball Dreams 2

(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £19.99

Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99

Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel

(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99

Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)

(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99

A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99

What a game. What a bargain.

Tactical Manager

(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99

An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hooray for Bullfrog.

Walls Of Rome

(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99

Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94

(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99

Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2

(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £34.99

As they say, if you liked Zool, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)

(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99

Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day

(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99

A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer

(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99

Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II

(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooow.

Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb

(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99

A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.

International Sensible Soccer

(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99

One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Liri Divil (CD)

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99

Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes

(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99

Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball

(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99

Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost

(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99

A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)

(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99

A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid

(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99

If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death

(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter

(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99

Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!

(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99

Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-ton of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs

(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA

A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions

(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99

Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2

(45) Core – Adventure £39.99

Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab

(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99

It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack

(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99

These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity

(50) Simarilis – Strategy £39.99

Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB

(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99

Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3

(55) Anco – Sport £29.99

Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions

(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99

Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football

(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99

The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV – Open Season

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99

Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge

(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99

Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon (CD)

US Gold – Adventure £59.99

Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada

(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99

Lots of good ideas stuck together but somehow it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy Game £39.99

Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine

(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99

A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization

(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cyclemania (CD)

(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99

Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike

(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99

Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade Game £49.99

The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monstrosities. Miss it at your peril.

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone In The Dark II (CD)

(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol

(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99

A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.

Dreamweb

(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Eccstacia

(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99

An utterly brilliant *Alone In The Dark*-like with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD

(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99

A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay.

Magic Carpet

(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Bloody excellent shoot 'em up – looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.

Project X

(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99

A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise Of The Robots

(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99

Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator

(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99

A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader

(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon

(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage

(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99

Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

</



(Left) **Theme Park:**
Sim City eat your heart out.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces Of The Deep

(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Simulator £39.99

Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World Of Lemmings

(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99

If you like all the other Lemmings games, you'll like this one, too.

Armored Fist (CD)

(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Simulation £44.99

Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

Creature Shock

(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99

An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Cyberwar

(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99

It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II

(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99

Love it for its brains, not for its looks.

Discworld

(96: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £49.99

Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball

(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99

It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play

(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Designer for Windows £39.99

Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm

(40) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'

Power Drive

(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99

Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off Power Drive.

Quarantine

(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

An excellent blast and it looks good, too.

Retribution

(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99

If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.

Warcraft

(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3

(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2

(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.

Commander Blood

(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99

It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore

(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99

Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer Of The Gods

(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA

Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3

(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99

Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King

(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99

The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing

(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99

Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

Nocropolis

(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows

(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though – it's actually quite good.

Voyeur

(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99

Not as perky as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and bras in it, but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).

Wing Commander 3

(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99

Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – definitely a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin

(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99

He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else.

Dark Forces

(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99

The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head To Head

(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99

We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against Virtuoso from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99

It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge

(70) Anco – Sport £29.99

The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII

(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99

The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights Of Xentar

(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99

A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan

(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA

Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game from SSI.

Metaltech: Earthsiege

(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99

Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail

(85: Recommended) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £44.99

The sequel to the keenly received *Blade of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip... *SuperKarts*

(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA

The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire

(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99

Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?

Wings Of Glory

(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA

Chocks away as Origin reaches for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers

(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99

Chuck Rock meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Ooops.

Big Red Adventure

(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99

This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could actually be quite good.

Bioforge

(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99

The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is *Bioforge* just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?

Descent

(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic

(78) ID/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

'Doom in tights.' Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault

(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99

A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.

Legions

(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99

This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under Windows. Eek!

Lost Eden

(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99

Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack

(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99

This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for Windows and all on one CD. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones

(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99

Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory

(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA

Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*? A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Guilty

(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99

Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike

(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original.

NBA Live

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99

EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.

Renegade

(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99

SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise of the Triad

(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95

Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog

(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99

A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander

(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99

A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth

(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99

A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM

(94 Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

The first X-COM was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date

(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99

Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-lead-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle

(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99

Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight Of The Amazon Queen

(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99

This game from Warner Interactive is desperately trying to be a LucasArts adventure but failing quite miserably. It's naff.

Hardball 4

(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99

Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader

(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation £39.99

Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the PC Zone office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds

(80: Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99

A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica

(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

Very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball

(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99

Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Int. – Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/ speedway thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"

(94: Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99

Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

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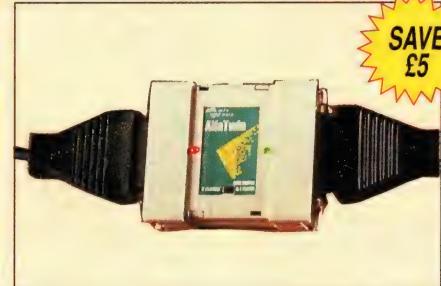
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(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3: More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.*

(Far right) *Command & Conquer: A case of Cannon Fodder meets Dune 2.*



Super Streetfighter II Turbo

(90: Classic) Gametek - Beat 'Em Up £39.99
It would seem that last month's theme was 'games with very long names'. Gametek's *SSFII Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga

(78) Mindscape - Naval/Strategy £44.99

Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid cd bits.

Virtua Chess

(85: Classic) Titus - Strategy £44.99

Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors

(85: Classic) Mindscape - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 - July 1995

1830

(68) US Gold - Board Game £39.99

Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey

(66) Merit Software - Sports Sim £39.95

Ice hockey sim with FIFA-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault

(81) Team 17 - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95

(73) Accolade/Warner - Sports Simulation £39.99

Top-down ice hockey game, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.

Chaos Control

(40) Philips/Infogrames - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer

(95: Classic) Virgin - Strategy Adventure £44.99

Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers.

Daedalus Encounter

(58) Virgin - Adventure £44.95

Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade - and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Dominus

(42) US Gold - Strategy Game £39.99

Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient - gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters

(78) Gametek - Space Strategy Simulation £39.99

Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance

(72) Mindscape - Strategy Game £39.99

Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar

(35) BMG Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £34.99

Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper it was printed on.

Michiavelli The Prince

(89) MicroProse - Strategy Game £44.99

Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Ut: The Double

(71) Krisalis - Sports Sim £29.99

The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccers* of this world.

Sim Tower

(70) Maxis - Strategy Game £39.99

Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive - and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool

(91: Classic) Interplay - Sports Sim £44.99

Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Issue 29 - August 1995

Civil War

(83: Recommended) Empire - Strategy Game £44.99

The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters

(93: Classic) Philips/GTE - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!

Hi-Octane

(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts - Racing Game £39.99

Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2

(92: Classic) Codemasters - Racing Game £44.99

A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy

(36) Domark - Adventure Game £39.99

Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2

(82: Recommended) Mirage Software - Strategy Wargame £44.99

Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.

Picture Perfect Golf

(30) Empire - Sports Sim £44.99

Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner Of Ice

(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99

The second game in Infogrames' *Cthulhu* range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.

Scottish Open Golf

(60) Core Design - Sports Sim £39.99

Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload

(7) Millennium/Psygnosis - Adventure Game £39.99

Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Strike 95

(62) Time Warner - Sports Sim £34.99

A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom

(90: Classic) GT Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex

(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive - Interactive Movie £39.99

It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrghhh!!!

Issue 30 - September 1995

Across the Rhine

(86: Recommended) MicroProse - Strategy Game £44.99

Well, if you're a propellor head you'll think it's the dog's gondas. If you're a bit of a thickey, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.

Action Soccer

(50) Ubisoft - Football Sim £34.99

It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap football game'.

Air Power

(84: Recommended) Mindscape - Flight Sim £44.99

Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chuck's in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIV Networks

(80: Recommended) Infogrames - Business Sim £44.99

A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2

(59) Interplay - Role Playing Game £44.99

It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty

(45) Sierra - Space Combat Sim £44.99

A good Windows-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lord of Midnight

(60) Domark - Adventure £44.99

Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment - our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.

Slim Town

(81: Recommended) Maxis - Simulation £29.99

Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon The Sorcerer 2

(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) - Adventure Game £44.99

Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6

(70) Sierra - Adventure Game £44.99

Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. Space Quest fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity

(80: Recommended) US Gold - Shoot 'Em Up Game £44.99

A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unadictive 'game-play' trousers.

US Marine Fighters

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £19.99

Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issue 31 - October 1995

EP2000

(97: Classic) Ocean/DID - Flight Sim £49.99

Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black

(94: Classic) Electronic Arts - Arcade Adventure £44.99

A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinny-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monstrosities and big guns.

The Need For Speed

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Racing Game £44.99

There's no need to buy a 3DO now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *FIGP2*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow

(96: Classic) Digital Integration - Sim £39.99

The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.

Buried In Time

(77) US Gold - Interactive Movie £44.99

The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2

(88: Recommended) Activision - Board Game £49.99

Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away

(19) Instant Access - Interactive Movie £39.99

A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes

(10) Gametek - Shoot 'Em Up £24.99

It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D

(71) Psygnosis - Puzzle Game £39.99

We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2

(45) Anco - Sport £34.99

Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

Championship Manager 2

(92: Classic) Domark - Sport £44.99 (TBC)

Every other football management game is just that - a game - but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

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AI Unser Jr Racing

(60) Mindscape - Racing Game £29.99

It has all the features you'd expect from a racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy

(93: Classic) Virgin - Strategy £39.99

More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast

(68) 7th Level - Beat 'Em Up £29.99

A cartoon beat 'em up with excellent animation, cut scenes and special effects - but that's it. Shame, 'cos it looks great, but as for gameplay - forget it.

Burn:Cycle

(85: Recommended) Philips - Interactive Adventure £44.99

One of the best interactive adventures we've seen; good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun

(70) American Laser Games/Mirage - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker

(62) Psygnosis - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons and lots to shoot at, but apart from that not much more.

Fatal Racing

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive - Racing £TBC

Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits - totally addictive.

NHL Hockey 96

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99

This uses Electronic Art's new 'Virtual Stadium' technology (used to great effect in *FIFA Soccer* to make it look so flash). Definitely one of the nicest-looking sports games we've reviewed for ages.

PGA Tour 96

(94: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99

New and improved! Now includes two new Championship courses, you can play as or against 14 actual photo-realistic pros, there's a new picture-in-picture view... need we go on? The best golf game just got better.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

(70) Activision - Platform £44.99

Conversion of the ancient Atari vcs platform game; nothing particularly special but still fairly addictive.

Primal Rage

(82: Recommended) Time Warner Interactive - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

Jurassic Park for psychopaths - yep, dinosaurs a-plenty, good gameplay and graphics. Should appeal to *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* fans.



More madness this month as interactive movies seem to be the chosen target...

Thought For The Day

Thought For The Day: "A puppy is for life, an Intel processor is for about six months - if you're lucky."

Mark Dodd, Essex

Congratulations - this actually beats our favourite Microsoft Word tip for the day: "Never run with scissors." If anyone else has any life-changing thoughts they'd care to share with us, we'd be glad to print them.

Play The Game

Right, this time I really am pissed off. Why have all of the games on the PC gone so shitty? Out of all those released in the past few months only about ten of them are actually worth having a look at. They may look bloody good, but most of them play like shit. What ever happened to games that had both good graphics and good gameplay, eh?

What I'd really like to see is a good strategy game, like the one suggested by Sean Leonard in issue 27 about football

hooligan management. Right on, Sean mate - that sounds a bit more like it. I reckon if we got enough people together we could force the software houses to produce games that we actually want to see, rather than the shit that we actually get. Why don't you do a feature about what we want rather than what we're getting? The only things we seem to get at the moment are *Doom* clones and interactive movies. What a load of old bollocks.

Pete Austin, Surrey

To be perfectly honest, the likelihood of anyone actually forcing the software houses to produce something is pretty low. As development teams get bigger and bigger and budgets swell to almost astronomical proportions we are starting to see some stuff that really is quite incredible. However, the only trouble is that these enormous projects have to be funded - and when a company makes its 'bread and butter' from games, it has only one means of generating cash. So the way it does this is by putting out less ambitious titles in the hope that it might sell a reasonable number of copies; the money gained from the sales of these low-budget games is then reinvested in the 'big' projects.

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, oft-described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

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Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

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CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

It's a good job we see these games first though, isn't it? After all, if something really is a pile of old toss we'll tell you - like the travesty that is *Cyberbykes*. On the other hand, if you dislike all games so much, why are you bothering at all? If you really do hate every game you could just sod off and do something else, then you wouldn't be wasting either your own time, or mine. Bye.

Heart Of Darkness

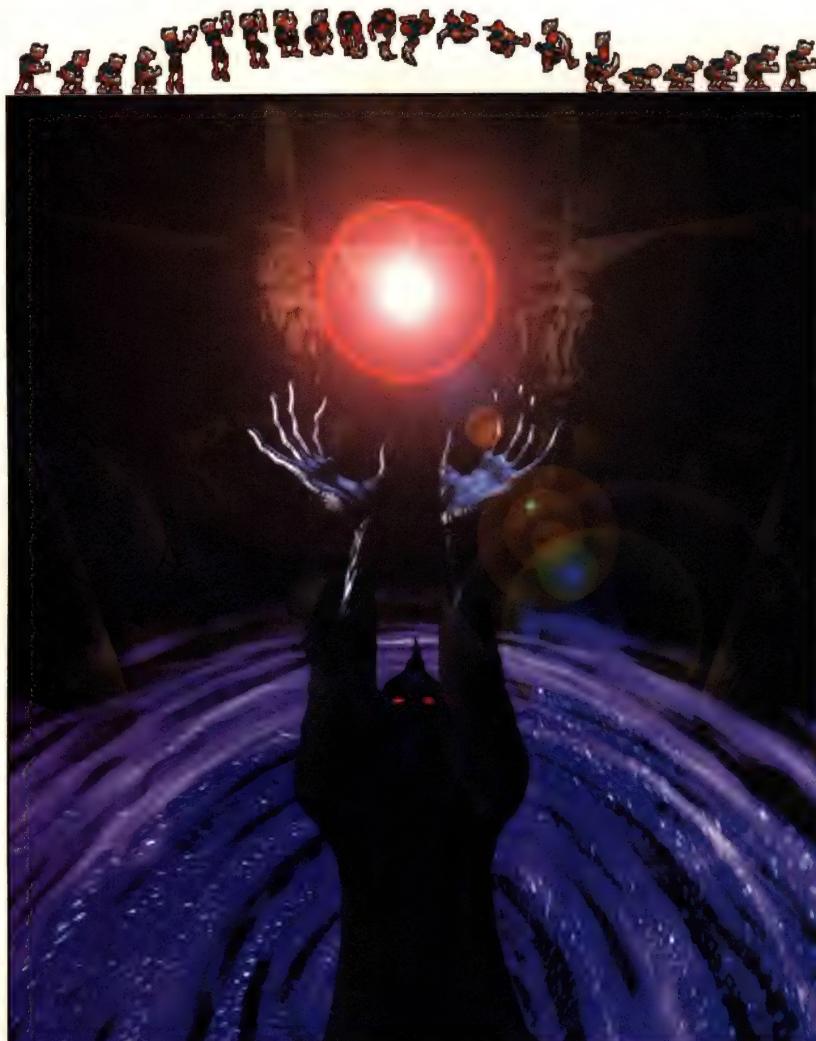
Surely it must be about time now for Virgin Interactive's 'amazing' *Heart Of Darkness* to finally come out, isn't it? Pah! Bollocks. *Flashback* scored 89% when it was reviewed last year - what's the betting that *Heart Of Darkness* gets less? I mean, how the hell can a flip screen game with limited actions and options be labelled an interactive movie? The same thing goes for *Wing Commander 3* (and *Wing Commander 4*).

Buried In Time, *Heart Of Darkness*, *Lost Eden*, *BioForge*, *Stonekeep*... the list of interactive wannabes goes on and on with at least two new ones turning up every month. Origin called *BioForge* an interactive movie when really it's just a suped-up version of *Alone In The Dark*!

I am a real film enthusiast, hoping to write screenplays myself one day (Oh god - Ed.) and I have to break it to you now... Every single interactive 'thing' released, or due to be released before December has a plot so cringeworthy, such crap acting and 'stars' that it really hasn't got a hope of succeeding. The only thing I can see Chris Roberts directing is the next instalment of *Power Rangers*. And that's only if he's lucky.

To be honest, *Doom* is as much of an interactive movie as the next game, and the interactive movie phenomenon that is sweeping the PC market is a false one. We can't expect a real interactive movie

(Right) *Heart of Darkness* - is it just another crap interactive movie? See Timothy Andrews' letter.



3 Weirdy Corner

As always we've got some weirdy letters this month, so here they are. As ever, printed verbatim for added comedic value.

I have a game called *Baldies* which is a **VERY GOOD GAME!** But my game went all wrong and got messed up. I have been hoping you can send me a copy of *Baldies*, can you?

Richard Vaughan, Oxon

How exactly have you got a game called Baldies? It's not out yet – in fact, from what we've heard it's not even finished. Hmm, you're not a naughty boy with a pirated copy, are you? Ooh, um, ahh... Just think of all the sleepless nights you're going to have worrying whether or not I'm going to call FAST and earn a grand from reporting you. Har har har.

In the past I've mentioned what weird letters we get here at PC Zone, and I've even threatened to bore you all by printing some of the more obscure ones. However, I've never come across something which makes the author seem like such a complete and utter tosser as this little gem. Maybe he thinks he's funny, who knows?

Now, I understand that we have a really crap currency compared to the pound and we battle to give our money away, but this is still no reason for being ripped off. The CD version of *PC Zone* sells for £4.99 in the UK but it knocks me back 45 Rand. Yes, **FORTY FIVE RAND!!!**

That is the equivalent of 25 loaves of bread which is sufficient to feed the average African family (parents and 15 kids) for at least a month... (*the letter continues in a suitably self-congratulatory way – Ed.*)

We're onto you. And we're watching your every move. I have already thought of a fitting punishment: you will be dressed in khaki and forced to ride a bike through Soweto on Freedom Day singing *This is my land, this is your land*.

So what's the solution? Easy. You give

me a free subscription and I will donate a couple of loaves of bread every month without fail to one of our thousands of charities like 'Feed Me, Clothe Me, But Don't Expect Me To Work For It'.

Long live Cukly.

Gary Petzer, South Africa

We've had several arguments in the office recently pondering the possibility of whether you are for real or not. Surely you can't really be such a complete arsewit? Nah, you can't really be

a stereotypical arrogant racist git, can you? Don't bother writing to me again. Cheers.

Because you printed just my threat and not my letter last time, the penguin is now dead. Remember – the lives of half a zoo are in your hands.

Briggsy, Quarter, Hamilton

Oh. Right. Cheers. Poor ol' Percy the Penguin, eh? Our campaign obviously didn't work (see issue 31).



for another ten years, at least. An interactive movie is not something that allows you to perform just action one or action two, you can do whatever happens to suit your twisted mentality.

I mean, *Heart Of Darkness* may have cool graphics, ear-bendingly good sound and who knows, it may even be a good game, but the most it can be is *Flashback 2*. That, to me, isn't satisfactory.

Timothy Andrews, Shenfield, Essex

Fair enough, point taken. It's true that *Heart of Darkness* is something that has the potential to be all flashiness and no gameplay, but then on the other hand it could also work out to be a very playable game because of its inherent simplicity.

The interactive movie industry is growing every year; one of the main aspects people seem to forget is that it isn't something separate from the games or the film/video industry, it's something that is integrating the two and will only ever actually become 'mainstream' when technology changes.

When we all have 'set-top boxes' or PCs that control everything with a common interface we will see movies, games and other forms of entertainment all being downloaded from some kind of central database. By then the technology will be sufficient that interactive and non-interactive products will be equally convincing. What we are going through now is a period where the separate elements of the entertainment industry are getting used to each other. A year ago we wouldn't have seen an A-list actor in a video game – now we are.

The games developers are getting used to big budgets and real 'stars' while the movie and TV mob are getting used to the idea that PCs and games are something to be taken seriously. In a couple of years we'll see music, movies and games converging into a central entertainment industry where there is no underdog. It'll be cool when it happens, but unfortunately we have to go through all of the teething problems first.



Blasphemer

I'm new to the world of PC gaming, having only owned my 486 for a month or so. I'm used to console games really, so I'd like to ask a few questions.

Firstly, *Doom*. I admit that I really do enjoy it. It's violent, original and fun, but why game mags, yours included, devote pages and pages to it is beyond me. It's one game. Let it go. 96%? Never.

On the same lines, *Dark Forces* and *Descent*. I'm a big *Star Wars* fan and so was naturally looking forward to another LucasArts classic – but the gameplay is 'empty'. You know when you're playing it that it's *Doom* with an Imperial helmet on. And *Descent*, along



With *Magic Carpet*, just has to be one of the most over-rated games ever! Where people arrive at the *Doom* similarity is beyond me, it's just 3D. Was 3D *Attack a Doom clone?*

Boogie, Mid Glam

Doom only a game!!! Let it go? Are you mad? Doom is the only game in history that has developed its own culture, the wad generation, the Deathmatch tournaments, the long and increasingly strange titles that Macca dreams up for himself. It has been responsible for creating a genre within a genre. Like Pac-Man, Space Invaders, King's Quest and Elite, Doom is a turning point in video game history. After it was released, nothing was the same again. More than ten million people have experienced Doom - how many other PC games can boast a figure like that? Okay, it may not be everyone's cup of tea, but the game is a milestone in games history and has been partly responsible for the awakening of the PC games industry. Don't knock it, it works.

Quake talk

Has anyone out there actually seen Quake running yet? We've all seen the screenshots and it looks lovely, but surely you need the ninja bastard PC from hell to run it?

Gary Falmer, Bristol

I've got a 486DX2. Am I going to be able to play Quake when it comes out, or should I just forget it?

Tim Griffiths, Surrey

How much will Quake be and what is the minimum system it will be able to run on? Have you actually seen the game playing? Is it any good?

Chris Lawrence, Cleveland

Nice screenshots of Quake, shame I've only got a P90 and probably won't be able to play the thing. Is it really going to be something that just takes the piss as far as specs are concerned?

H Poole, Liverpool

When is iD going to release Quake? We've been hearing things about it for nearly a year now. Is it real?

James Bonham, Bath

PC Zone recently had a meeting with iD Software's Jay Wilbur, where we looked at both Hexen (see our bumper supplement this issue) and then went on to take a long look at an extremely early version of Quake.

And as we've said before, iD is now

going to ditch

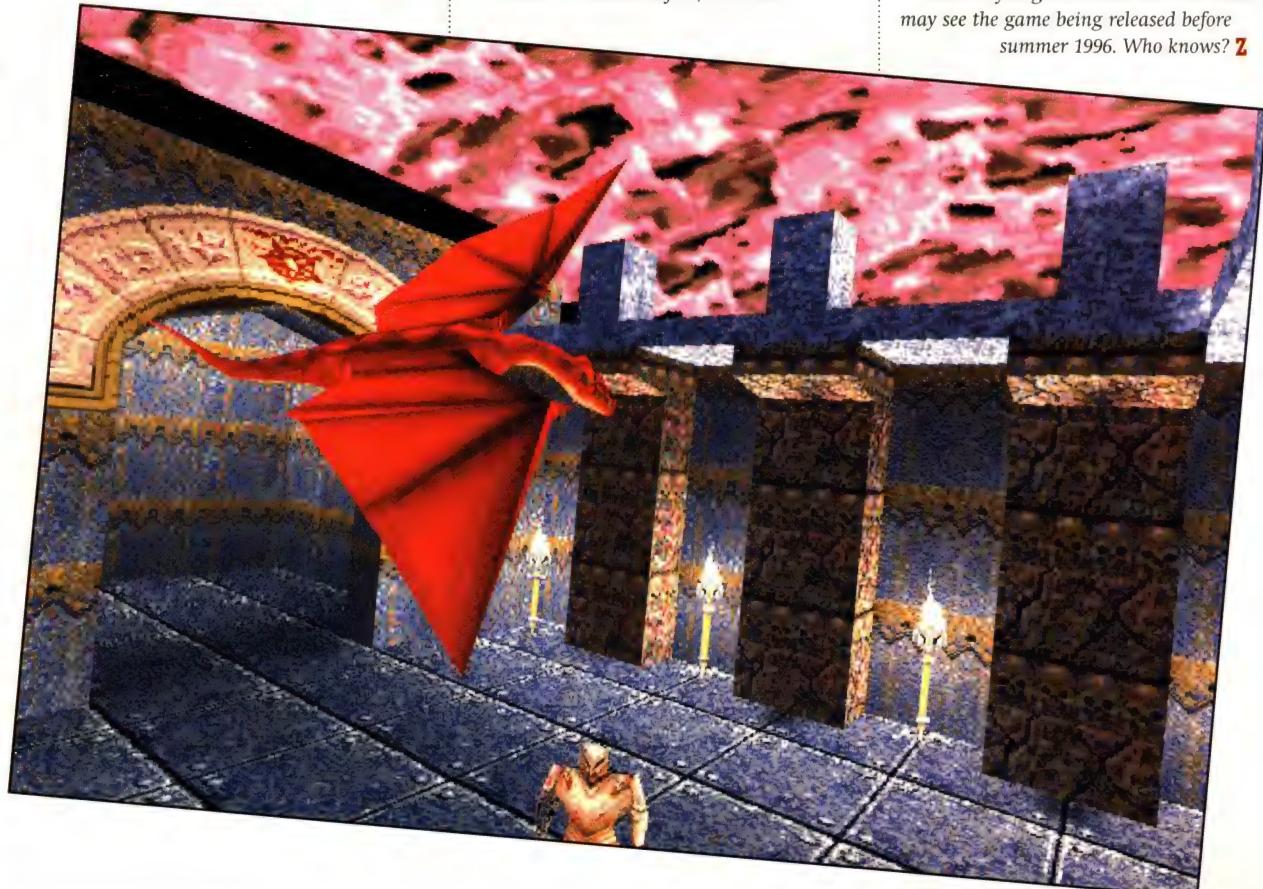
the Doom engine completely and will almost certainly upload the entire development system on the Internet very much like it did with the Wolfenstein system last year. Quake is the way ahead and it's something completely different.

Graphically it's obviously far more impressive than anything the team has ever produced before, but the main differences are in the 'physics' of the Quake engine itself. The player in the Quake environment is now virtually a simulated person with weight and a centre of gravity. For example, if you run along a corridor and screech to a halt at the top of a flight of stairs, the view will change as though you were swaying forward to try and stop yourself. Also, as you move around corners, the view leans in much the same way as you would lean your head.

And as far as release dates go, Jay was adamant that this would be just the same as all other iD products. "Quake will be released only when it's ready and not before. We only ever release a product when we are 100 per cent happy with it."

So there you go. A conservative estimate may see the game being released before summer 1996. Who knows? **Z**

(Right) Quake: Probably responsible for filling our mailbag more than any other game.



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BEFORE SITTING DOWN TO WRITE this, I nipped into the kitchen to make a quick cup of tea.

While waiting for the kettle to boil, I noticed something. It has to do with sugar. Or, more to the point, the packaging. Here's the gig: the bag of sugar I'm currently consuming has a small picture on the front, underneath and to one side of the main logo. It's a 'serving suggestion'. And can you guess what the 'serving suggestion' picture is illustrating? I'll tell you... it's showing you that you can put sugar into a mug of tea. Uncanny, eh? I'll certainly be making sure I continue to do just that in the future. Go and have a look in your larder now, and you'll get the revelation first-hand. (As long as you've bought Whitworth's sugar, that is... if you've got Silver Spoon or Tate & Lyle you'll be buggered.)

Enough of sugar, though, and onto a really, really sad acquaintance of mine. I'll call him Nigel (even though his name is actually Nick). In fact, I won't even call him Nigel... I'll call him Captain Anorak.

And here's why.

Shipspotters ahoy!

You may be aware that BBC2 has recently been going overboard on submarines (no pun intended). First of all there's been the *Nautilus* series of documentaries on submarine warfare, which Captain Anorak liked very much indeed. And he was over the moon at the rerun of the (admittedly brill)

subtitled German series *Das Boot*. This submarine overload sent him into a research frenzy, and he hit his local library - big time. I can only remember the title of one of the books he withdrew (it was called *Naval Hydrodynamics*), but you'll get a better idea of the sort of stuff we're talking about when I tell you that the combined weight of these wordy tomes added up to almost 15kg. That's like about three bags of sugar (hey! sugar again!) per book.

And here's how I got dragged into Captain Anorak's anal little world...

"Are there any good submarine simulations?" he asked, having phoned me at about 2.30 in the morning. He imposed a few limitations on what he was after, most importantly that it had to work on his 486, that it had to be very realistic, and that preferably it would be set in World War II.

I told him to get *Aces Of The Deep*.

"Is it just like being there?" he now wanted to know.

I reminded him that I hadn't actually been involved in WWII, but added that the *Aces* depth gauge looked exactly like the one in *Das Boot*. Same colours and everything. I also told him that there were brilliant 'creaking and groaning' noises if you went too deep.

"I shan't be taking those kinds of risks," he replied. (His exact words, honest. Tosser, eh?) Captain Anorak then hung up, leaving me free to go back to sleep.

So far so sad, I hope you'll agree. But all of this is nothing compared to what comes next.

He phoned me a couple of days ago to thank me for my advice, and to tell me that *Aces* is indeed 'splendid'. (And this is a fortnight after the first call, you understand.) Anyway, to prop up the flagging conversation I asked him how many ships he'd sunk. I was expecting a boring list of victories.

Wrong.

"None as yet," was his actual reply, which was extremely surprising.

(For the uninitiated I'll quickly explain how to play *Aces Of The Deep*; due to the long periods at sea between enemy contacts, you go to the overhead map screen and speed up the clock - days then happen in minutes and you should sink your first ship within the hour.)

"But you've had the game for two weeks," I said. "You must have hit something by now, surely?"

"I haven't even seen any ships yet," he said.

There was obviously something happening that I didn't as yet understand. So I asked a couple more questions.

And I got a couple of replies.

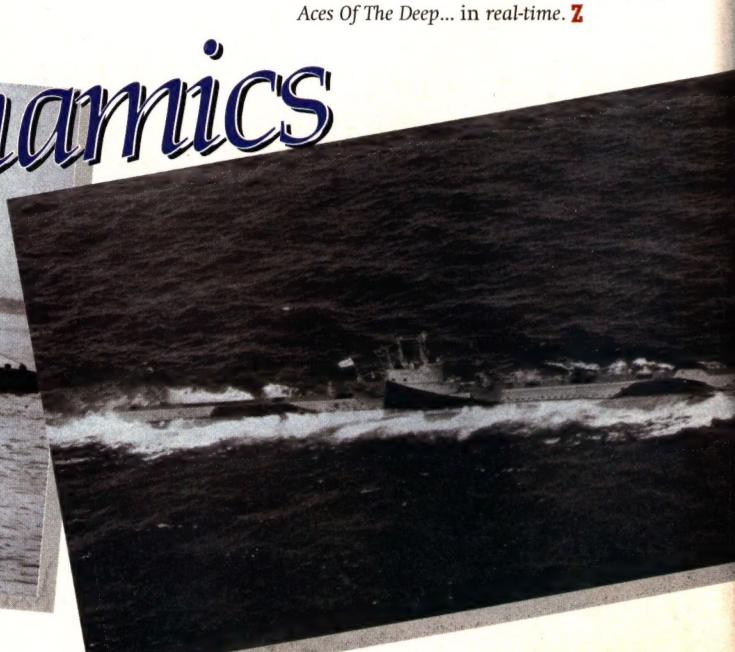
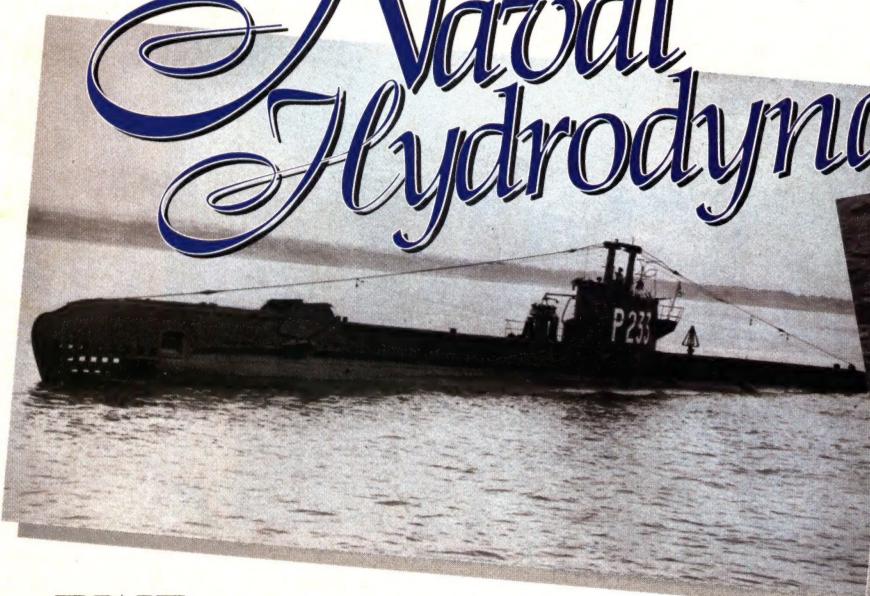
We talked at cross-purposes for a few minutes more, but then the grim reality slowly began to dawn on me.

It was like a time-lapse sunrise.

I hoped I was wrong, but I wasn't.

It's sad to think, isn't it, that as you read these words, there's a bedroom within a house situated in the depths of East Sussex, and that inside this bedroom, with the lights dimmed low, the tragic figure of Captain Anorak is slumped in front of a monitor, playing *Aces Of The Deep*... in real-time. **Z**

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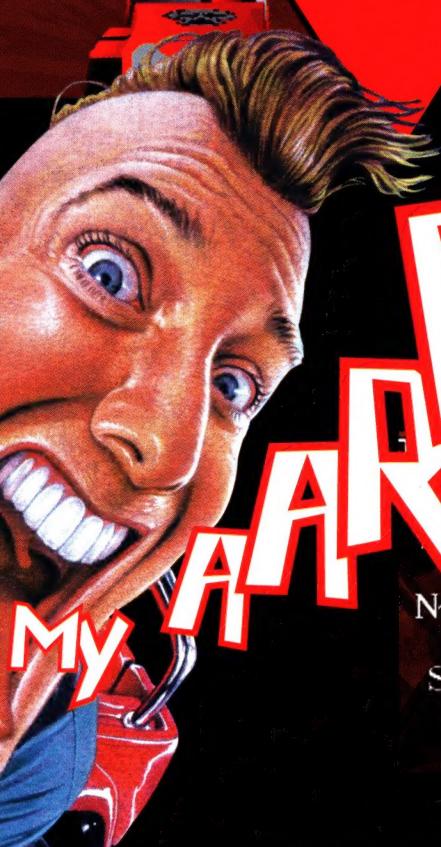
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